

The Schism, Hellenism and Politics:  
A review of the emergence of Ecumenical Orthodoxy AD 100-400.

by

Rugare Rukuni

submitted in accordance with the requirements for  
the degree of

**MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

in the subject

**CHURCH HISTORY**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF E OLIVER

(March 2018)

## Table of Contents

	Page
Table of contents .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	viii
Commitment to avoid plagiarism .....	ix
Certificate of the editor .....	x
Keywords .....	xi
Abbreviations used to refer to original sources .....	xii
Abbreviations of Biblical Books .....	xiv
List of Diagrams used .....	xv
Chronology/Timeline .....	xvi
Abstract .....	xviii
 <b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	 <b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	1
1.2 AREA OF INVESTIGATION .....	2
1.2.1 Challenges foreseen and unforeseen (limitations to the hypothesis) .....	3
1.3 JUSTIFICATION .....	4
1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION .....	5
1.4.1 Research question .....	5
1.4.2 Sub-questions .....	5
1.4.3 Aims and objectives .....	5
1.5 HYPOTHESIS .....	6
1.5.1 Hypothesis defined .....	6
1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND KEYWORDS .....	6
1.6.1 Orthodoxy .....	7
1.6.2 Ecumenism .....	7
1.6.3 Ecumenical councils .....	7
1.6.4 Ecumenical orthodoxy .....	7
1.6.5 Hellenism .....	8
1.6.6 Imperial Christianity .....	8
1.6.7 Contextualization .....	8
1.6.8 Heresy .....	8
1.6.9 Schism .....	9
1.6.10 Ceasaropapism .....	9
1.6.11 Constantinianism .....	10
1.6.12 Enculturation .....	10

	<b>Page</b>
1.6.13 Tanakh .....	10
1.6.14 Episcopal .....	10
1.6.15 Self-definition/differentiation .....	11
1.7 DIAGRAM 1 .....	11
1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE .....	12
1.9 SUMMARY .....	14
 <b>CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	 <b>16</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	16
2.2 LAYOUT AND ORGANIZATION .....	16
2.3 RESEARCH METHOD .....	17
2.3.1 Document analysis .....	17
2.3.2 Use of the method and its strengths .....	18
2.3.2.1 The use of method in analysing the documents .....	19
2.3.2.2 Coding of data .....	20
2.3.3 Document analysis through cultural historiography .....	21
2.3.3.1 Enculturation and self-definition .....	21
2.3.3.2 Sociological models .....	22
2.3.4 Document analysis through descriptive research .....	23
2.3.5 Document analysis through exploratory research .....	24
2.3.6 Document analysis and the causal research design .....	25
2.3.7 Document analysis and the great thinker model .....	25
2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	26
2.5 SUMMARY .....	26
 <b>CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	 <b>28</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	28
3.2 THE CONSTANTINIAN QUESTION AND ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP .....	28
3.2.1 How many Constantines? Degree of imperial influence upon AD 325 Christianity .....	29
3.2.2 Constantine and ecumenical orthodoxy .....	31
3.2.2.1 Imperial influence versus episcopal polities .....	31
3.2.2.2 Passive imperial influence for promotion of unity .....	32
3.2.2.3 Ecumenical orthodoxy as progressive imperial religious policy .....	33

	<b>Page</b>
3.2.2.4 Ecumenical orthodoxy: Merger of ecclesiastical and imperial polities .....	33
3.2.2.5 Schism, Hellenism and politics: Emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy .....	34
3.2.2.6 Summary .....	35
<b>CHAPTER 4 THE EMERGENCE OF ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY .....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	36
4.2 ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY .....	36
4.2.1 Contextualization .....	37
4.3 THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN SCHISM AND ITS IMPACT .....	38
4.3.1 Christianity's charismatic Judaic foundations .....	39
4.3.2 The schism as active alienation .....	40
4.3.3 Deviation from Hebraic literature .....	41
4.3.4 Polemic emergence of heresy .....	42
4.3.4.1 Cumulative build-up of the argument .....	43
4.3.5 Departure from Jewish Christianity .....	44
4.3.6 The <i>Birkat haMinim</i> (curse on the heretics) .....	46
4.3.6.1 Alternative viewpoint on the impact of the <i>Birkat haMinim</i> .....	47
4.3.7 Revisionism and the significance of the schism .....	48
4.3.7.1 Yoder and the differentiation of two groups: An alternative perspective and analysis .....	48
4.3.7.2 The impact of AD 70 .....	50
4.3.7.3 The self-defining solution .....	51
4.3.8 The schism positioned in ecumenical orthodoxy .....	52
4.3.8.1 Implications of the schism .....	53
4.4 SUMMARY .....	53
<b>CHAPTER 5 HELLENISATION OF CHRISTIANITY: CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY EMERGES .....</b>	<b>55</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	55
5.2 HELLENISM AS PHILOSOPHY: JUSTIN THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER .....	55
5.2.1 Justin the Stoic .....	58
5.2.2 Cumulative deductions: Self-differentiating enculturation .....	59
5.3 PAGAN RETALIATION .....	59

	<b>Page</b>
5.3.1 Deduced insights .....	60
5.3.2 The second sophistic phase .....	60
5.4 EXCLUSIVE HOMOGENEITY: HELLENISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO ORTHODOXY .....	61
5.4.1 On homogeneity .....	62
5.4.2 Irenaeus: Structures of truth and the common faith .....	64
5.4.3 Body of truth .....	66
5.5 FORMATION OF AN ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY .....	66
5.5.1 Homogeneity and the cultic nature of the emerging orthodoxy .....	68
5.5.2 Cultic emergence: Second-temple orthodoxy versus ecumenical orthodoxy .....	68
5.5.2.1 A sociological approach .....	73
5.5.3 Gnosticism, the cultic sect .....	74
5.5.3.1 Ecumenical orthodoxy, homogeneity and Hellenistic enculturation: Conclusive remarks .....	76
5.5.3.2 Hellenism as Gnosticism .....	77
5.5.3.3 The contribution of Gnosticism to orthodoxy .....	78
5.5.3.3.1 Reactionary formation of orthodoxy .....	78
5.5.3.3.2 Systems of self-definition .....	79
5.5.3.3.3 Deduced view .....	81
5.6 DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY – AN ANTITHESIS TO ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY .....	82
5.6.1 A cultural blend .....	82
5.6.2 North African Christianity .....	83
5.6.2.1 Remnants of Jewish Christianity .....	84
5.6.2.2 Intransigent roots against ecumenism .....	85
5.6.2.3 A resistant martyrdom .....	85
5.6.2.4 Uncompromised position .....	86
5.6.2.5 Deduced view .....	87
5.7 IRENAEUS' INNOVATION OF ORTHODOXY .....	87
5.7.1 Formulated opinion .....	88
5.8 THE BIRTH OF AN EPISCOPAL HIERARCHY .....	88
5.8.1 A monarchical bishopric .....	89
5.8.2 Ignatius of Antioch: Harmony under the clerical monarchy .....	90
5.9 SUMMARY .....	93

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6    POLITICS: IMPERIAL INFLUENCE                   AND ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY .....</b>	<b>94</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	94
6.2 THE INTERSECTION .....	94
6.2.1 A new era .....	95
6.2.1.1 Debunking the myth .....	95
6.2.1.2 Towards unity in uniformity .....	96
6.3 THE CONTROVERSIES AND IMPERIAL INVOLVEMENT .....	96
6.3.1 The Donatist controversy: An antithetical look at ecumenical orthodoxy .....	96
6.3.1.1 Resurgent intransigence .....	97
6.3.1.2 A reluctant emperor .....	98
6.3.1.3 Constantine as the catholic emperor .....	99
6.3.1.4 The Donatist resistance .....	100
6.3.1.5 An alternative narrative .....	101
6.3.1.6 The Arles synod .....	102
6.3.1.7 Synthesis of reviews with developed hypothesis .....	104
6.3.2 The Arian controversy and Nicaea .....	105
6.3.2.1 The Meletian prelude .....	105
6.3.2.2 Philosophical implications .....	106
6.3.2.3 The eastern focus .....	107
6.3.2.4 Theological debate .....	109
6.3.2.5 Hellenistic syncretism .....	112
6.3.2.6 The Christology of Arius .....	114
6.3.2.7 Episcopacy, theology and politics .....	116
6.3.2.8 The council and its implications .....	117
6.3.2.9 Possible deductions .....	118
6.3.2.10 Philosophical turbulence and a binding creed .....	119
6.3.2.11 Anti-Semitism and the ecumenical agenda .....	122
6.3.2.12 Nicene orthodoxy as post AD 325 Christianity .....	123
6.4 The Constantinian turn .....	124
6.4.1 Imperial polity or just politics? .....	124
6.4.2 Constantine, the convergence of philosophy and politics .....	128
6.5 SUMMARY .....	129
<b>CHAPTER 7    DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>131</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION.....	131

	<b>Page</b>
7.2 ARIAN POLITIES .....	131
7.2.1 Constantine in ecclesiastical politics .....	133
7.2.2 Imperial Christianity or episcopal polity? .....	134
7.3 COUNCILS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY .....	135
7.3.1 Councils <i>en route</i> to ecumenical orthodoxy .....	138
7.3.2 Emergence of canon law .....	138
7.3.3 Cyprian's episcopacy .....	139
7.3.3.1 <i>De unitate ecclesiae</i> (On ecclesiastical unity) .....	142
7.3.3.2 Ecumenical orthodoxy and episcopal establishment .....	143
7.3.4 Constantine and the bishops .....	144
7.3.5 Bishops after Constantine .....	145
7.4 SUMMARY .....	146
 <b>CHAPTER 8 RESULTS .....</b>	 <b>148</b>
8.1 INTRODUCTION .....	148
8.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY .....	148
8.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHISMATIC AND CULTIC ELEMENTS IN THE FORMATION ORTHODOXY .....	149
8.3.1 Need for a synthesis after the antithesis .....	149
8.3.2 A desirable unity and union .....	150
8.4 A NEW MODEL .....	150
8.4.1 A sociological model: Deductions from Judaism and implications for later Christianity .....	151
8.4.1.1 Ecumenical unity between the Pharisees and the cultic process .....	152
8.5 ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY: DERIVED EPISCOPAL POLITY .....	153
8.5.1 The French monarchy as an episcopal reform .....	154
8.6 DEDUCED AND APPLIED MODEL: DIAGRAM 4 .....	156
8.7 PATRIOTIC ORTHODOXY AGAINST ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY: THE DONATIST AND ETHIOPIAN CHURCH (ANTITHETICAL ARGUMENT FOR HYPOTHESIS) .....	157
8.8 SUMMARY .....	160
 <b>CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION .....</b>	 <b>163</b>
9.1 INTRODUCTION .....	163
9.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW .....	163
9.3 SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS .....	165

	<b>Page</b>
9.4 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	166
9.5 CONCLUSIONS FROM FINDINGS .....	171
9.5.1 A convergence of factors .....	171
9.5.2 A self-defining continuum .....	171
9.5.3 Rethinking Eusebius and Nicaea .....	172
9.5.4 A more nuanced approach .....	172
9.5.5 Other possible contributions .....	173
9.5.5.1 Redefinition of Christian eras .....	173
9.5.5.2 Emphasis on Judaic roots .....	174
9.5.5.3 New coinage of a principle .....	174
9.5.5.4 Emphasis of a worldview aspect .....	174
9.5.6 Deduced model: Diagram 5 .....	174
9.6 RESEARCH LIMITATION .....	176
9.7 GROUNDS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	177
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>180</b>



## **Acknowledgements**

May all the praise and glory be given to our heavenly Father who enables us in all things. Of note are certain individuals and organizations that facilitated this achievement.

### **My Sincerest gratitude to:**

- Prof. E. Oliver my supervisor for the guidance and great optimism, from the onset of the study until its completion. My earnest gratitude for your vision and inspiration.
- My mother and wife for their unwavering moral support throughout the program, for the positivity and continual encouragement they provided.
- Rev. W. Oliver for the edition work which saw the refinement of the document.
- C. Sibanda for igniting the spark for a greater revisionist enquiry in church history.
- UNISA for enabling me to access this study opportunity.

## **Commitment to avoid plagiarism**

Student Number: 58535101

I hereby declare that this dissertation, which is based on my research, The Schism, Hellenism and Politics: A review of the emergence of Ecumenical Orthodoxy AD 100-400 is my own work, and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I have committed myself to avoid plagiarism on every level of my research, and have fully cited, according to the Harvard Method, every source that I used, including books, articles, internet sources and images.

26/02/2017

Date

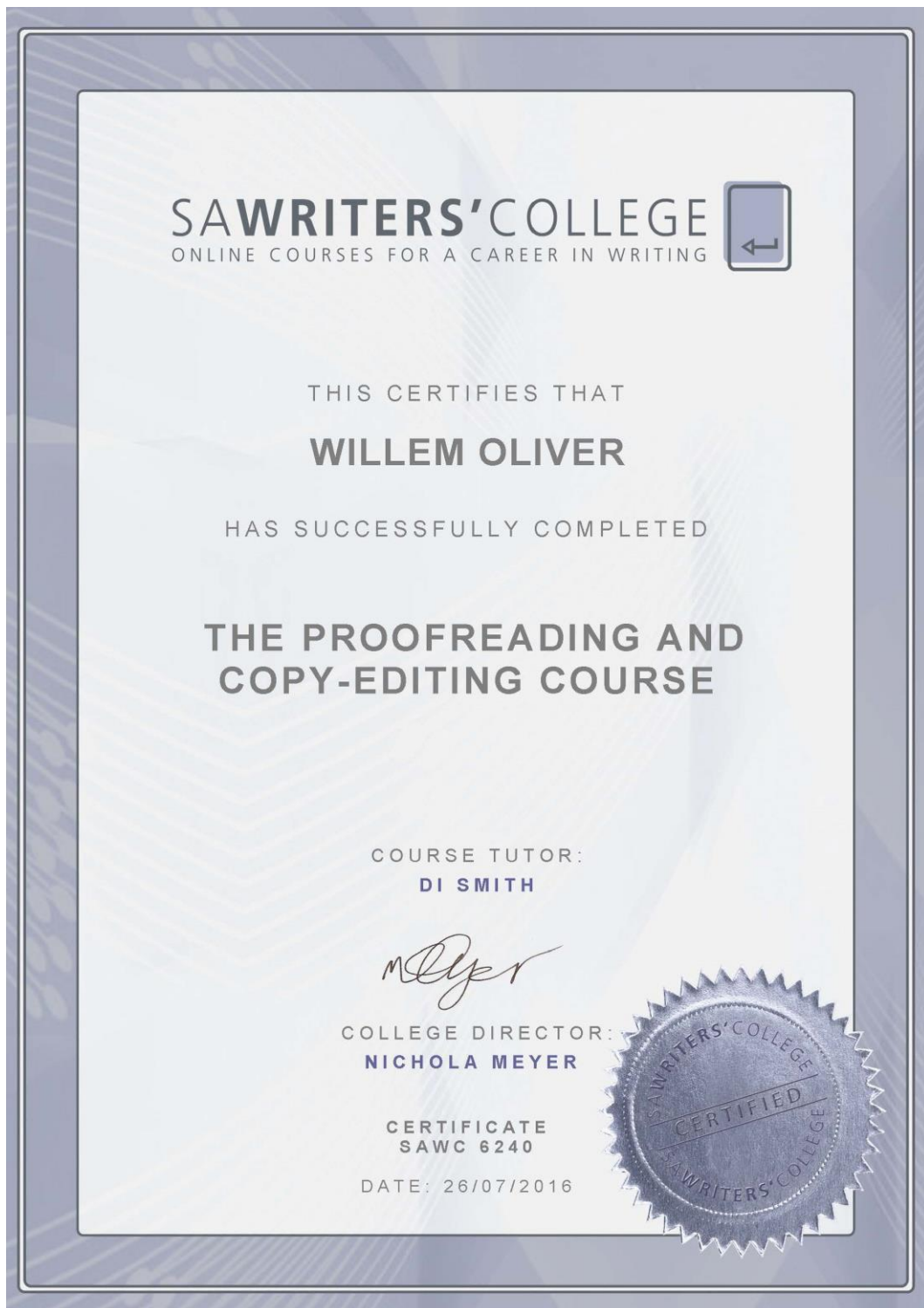
Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Place

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rugare Rukuni', written on a light-colored background.

Signature: Rugare Rukuni

## Certificate of the editor



## **Keywords**

Constantine

Constantinianism

Councils

Early Christianity

Ecumenical orthodoxy

Episcopal

Hellenistic enculturation

Imperial Christianity

Jewish Christianity

Jewish-Christian Schism

Orthodoxy

Self-definition

## Abbreviations used to refer to original sources

Abbreviation	Full name of Document	Author
<b>Adv Haer</b>	<i>Adversus Haereses</i> <i>Against Heresies</i>	Irenaeus
<b>Anast Aug</b>	<i>Epistula Ad Anastasium Imperatorem</i> <i>Letter to Anastasius Augustus</i>	Gelasius
<b>Ant Jud</b>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i> <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>	Josephus
<b>Apol</b>	<i>Apology</i>	Justin Martyr
<b>Yoma</b>	<i>Yoma (order of festivals)</i>	Talmud
<b>CD</b>	<i>Damascus Document</i>	Qumran
<b>Cont Cels</b>	<i>Contra Celsum</i> <i>Against Celsus</i>	Origen
<b>Cont Const</b>	<i>Contra Constantium</i> <i>Against Constantius</i>	Hilary of Poitiers
<b>Cont Noet</b>	<i>Contra Noetum</i> <i>Against Noetus</i>	Hippolytus
<b>Cont Prax</b>	<i>Contra Praxeas</i> <i>Against Praxeas</i>	Tertullian
<b>De Decret Nic Syn</b>	<i>De Decretis Nicaenae Synodi</i> <i>Defence of the Nicene Definition</i>	Athanasius
<b>De Doc Christ</b>	<i>De Doctrina Christiana</i> <i>On Christian Doctrine</i>	Augustine
<b>De Lap</b>	<i>De Lapsis</i> <i>On the Lapsed</i>	Cyprian
<b>De Orat</b>	<i>De Oratione</i> <i>On Prayer</i>	Tertullian
<b>De Princip</b>	<i>De Principiis</i> <i>On First Principles</i>	Origen
<b>Dial Trypho</b>	<i>Dialogue cum Tryphone</i> <i>Dialogue with Trypho</i>	Justin Martyr
<b>Div Inst</b>	<i>Divinae Institutiones</i> <i>The Divine Institutes</i>	Lactantius
<b>DMP</b>	<i>De mortibus persecutorum</i> <i>On the deaths of the persecutors</i>	Lactantius
<b>Don</b>	<i>Against the Donatists</i>	Optatus
<b>Eph</b>	<i>Ephesians</i>	Ignatius
<b>Ep</b>	<i>Epistulae</i> <i>Epistles</i>	Ambrose
<b>Epist</b>	<i>Epistulae</i>	Basil

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Full name of Document</b>	<b>Author</b>
	<i>Epistles</i>	
<b><i>Epist ad Ant</i></b>	<i>Epistula ad Antonianum</i> <i>Epistle to Antonian</i>	Cyprian
<b><i>Epistulae</i></b>	<i>Epistulae</i> <i>Epistles</i>	Cyprian
<b><i>HE</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Theodotus
<b><i>Hist</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Socrates
<b><i>Hist Arian</i></b>	<i>Historia Arianorum</i> <i>History of the Arians</i>	Athanasius
<b><i>Hist Eccl</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Eusebius
<b><i>Hist Eccles</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Philostorgius
<b><i>Histor Eccl</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>	Rufinus
<b><i>Hist Ecclest</i></b>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>	Sozomen
<b><i>Mag</i></b>	<i>Letter to the Magnesians</i>	Ignatius
<b><i>NHC</i></b>	<i>Nag Hammadi Codices</i>	Various
<b><i>Orat Const</i></b>	<i>Oratio de Laudibus Constantini</i> <i>Oration in Praise of Constantine</i>	Eusebius
<b><i>Pan Haer</i></b>	<i>Panarion Adversus Haereses</i> <i>Medicine Chest against Heresies</i>	Epiphanius
<b><i>Menahot</i></b>	<i>(meal offerings)</i>	Talmud and Tosefta
<b><i>Thalia</i></b>	<i>Thalia</i> <i>'Festivity'</i>	Arius
<b><i>Trall</i></b>	<i>Letter to the Trallians</i>	Ignatius
<b><i>Unit Eccl</i></b>	<i>De Unitate Ecclesiae</i> <i>On the unity of the church</i>	Cyprian
<b><i>VC</i></b>	<i>Vita Constantini</i> <i>Life of Constantine</i>	Eusebius
<b><i>Wars</i></b>	<i>Wars of the Jews</i>	Josephus
<b><i>Yoma</i></b>	<i>Yoma (order of festivals)</i>	Talmud and Tosefta

## Abbreviations of Biblical books

All the references to the Bible refer to the New International Version (NIV) or are personal interpretations.

Book	Abbreviation	Book	Abbreviation
<b>Genesis</b>	Gn	<b>Nahum</b>	Nah
<b>Exodus</b>	Ex	<b>Habakkuk</b>	Hab
<b>Leviticus</b>	Lev	<b>Zephaniah</b>	Zeph
<b>Numbers</b>	Num	<b>Haggai</b>	Hag
<b>Deuteronomy</b>	Dt	<b>Zechariah</b>	Zech
<b>Joshua</b>	Jos	<b>Malachi</b>	Mal
<b>Judges</b>	Jdg	<b>Matthew</b>	Mt
<b>Ruth</b>	Ruth	<b>Mark</b>	Mk
<b>1 Samuel</b>	1 Sam	<b>Luke</b>	Lk
<b>2 Samuel</b>	2 Sam	<b>John</b>	Jn
<b>1 Kings</b>	1 Ki	<b>Acts</b>	Ac
<b>2 Kings</b>	2 Ki	<b>Romans</b>	Rm
<b>1 Chronicles</b>	1 Chr	<b>1 Corinthians</b>	1 Cor
<b>2 Chronicles</b>	2 Chr	<b>2 Corinthians</b>	2 Cor
<b>Ezra</b>	Ezra	<b>Galatians</b>	Gal
<b>Nehemiah</b>	Neh	<b>Ephesians</b>	Eph
<b>Esther</b>	Esther	<b>Philippians</b>	Php
<b>Job</b>	Job	<b>Colossians</b>	Col
<b>Psalms</b>	Ps	<b>1 Thessalonians</b>	1 Th
<b>Proverbs</b>	Pr	<b>2 Thessalonians</b>	2 Th
<b>Ecclesiastes</b>	Ecc	<b>1 Timothy</b>	1 Tim
<b>Song of Songs</b>	SS	<b>2 Timothy</b>	2 Tim
<b>Isaiah</b>	Is	<b>Titus</b>	Tit
<b>Jeremiah</b>	Jer	<b>Philemon</b>	Phm
<b>Lamentations</b>	Lam	<b>Hebrews</b>	Heb
<b>Ezekiel</b>	Ez	<b>James</b>	Jas
<b>Daniel</b>	Dn	<b>1 Peter</b>	1 Pt
<b>Hosea</b>	Hos	<b>2 Peter</b>	2 Pt
<b>Joel</b>	Joel	<b>1 John</b>	1 Jn
<b>Amos</b>	Amos	<b>2 John</b>	2 Jn
<b>Obadiah</b>	Ob	<b>3 John</b>	3 Jn
<b>Jonah</b>	Jonah	<b>Jude</b>	Jude
<b>Micah</b>	Micah	<b>Revelation</b>	Rev

## **List of Diagrams used**

Diagram 1: Page 11

Diagram 2: Page 139

Diagram 3: Page 141

Diagram 4: Page 156

Diagram 5: Page 175



## Chronology/Timeline

Date AD/CE	Event/ Figure and duration of influence/writings
64	Burning of Rome
66-70	Judaic War
70-110	Didache
75-100	Josephus
98-117	Ignatius
117-138	Hadrian
132-135	Bar Kochba Revolution
144-170	Marcion
150-151	Justin Martyr
156	Martyrdom of Polycarp
165	Martyrdom of Justin
180-181	Celsus
180-200	Irenaeus
197-222	Tertullian
200-254	Origen
203	Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas
245-270	Cyprian
249-251	Decius
250-251	Decian Persecution
284-305	Diocletian
286-305	Maximian
301-311	Peter of Alexandria
306	Elvira Synod
303-308	Meletius of Lycopolis
307-337	Constantine
308-324	Licinius
303-311	The Great Persecution
311	Edict of Toleration
312	Vision of Constantine

313	Joint Edict of Milan
313-339	Eusebius of Caesarea
314	The Council of Arles
323-336	Arius
325	The Council of Nicaea
328-373	Athanasius
330	Foundation of Constantinople
336	Council of Constantinople
370-379	Basil of Caesarea
374-397	Ambrose of Milan
379-392	Theodosius I
390	Ambrose's excommunication of Theodosius

## **Abstract**

For many Christians the names 'Constantine' and Nicaea are not a familiar idea. In instances where they do recognize these names, they tend to be prejudiced towards the 'pagan emperor' and the 'venerated council' (Olson 1999:160). The importance of the First Nicene Council and the emperor's role in the council may be seen as historical only. However, the events related to the development of the Nicene orthodoxy and the role the emperor played in the development of the relations between politics and religion are still influencing the lives of Christians today and therefore, these important events are in need of a review, this time from an African perspective.

A probe into the imperial religious-political play may hold many significant answers in relation to contextualization, enculturation, dogmatic teaching, and the relationship between the church and state, amongst other things. In this dissertation document analysis is used in literature study to establish the significance of one of the interactive factors in the period leading to the first ecumenical council. Using a tri-categorical classification of the era, this study reviews the Jewish-Christian schism, Hellenism, and ultimately the role of imperial politics in the development of Christianity. The Jewish-Christian schism refers to the separation between Judaism and Christianity as the conceptive stage of the dynamics through which ecumenical orthodoxy was formed. Hellenism broadly refers to the integration of philosophy with Christianity. Finally, imperial politics was the political dynamic that contributed to the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy.

This facilitated an investigation of the era between AD 70 and 325, enhancing a revisionist approach to Constantine, the Nicene Council and the orthodoxy that emerged post AD 325 – with an implied deduction of ecclesiastical polities which became an unconventional phenomenon. The study, engaging with primary sources and specialist scholarship on the era, derived and developed a revisionist approach on Constantinian influence upon Christianity. In the findings the ecclesiastical polity appeared as the significant influence in the shaping of ecumenical orthodoxy. The ecclesiastical polity itself being a factor of the very process of self-definition and contextualization. The significance of enculturation as established in the research implied cultural diversity as a major factor in the formation of religious orthodoxy,

hence this implied the Jewish Christian schism as the departure point of enquiry. The research implied the development of social models as an interpretation and analysis of the hypothesis. The aforementioned social models had implications for Christian/religious eras even post the one at study. Therefore, making the hypothesis a tool of measuring the interaction of politics, socio-ethnic dynamics and religion in different eras. In principle the study enables a review of history as a factor of these three elements culture, religious syncretism and politics.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The early history of Christianity is a panorama of great events of socio-political significance. The Christianization of Rome, a dominant power in antiquity, makes enquiry into this phase of history exciting – after all, this was religious thought that got hold of an Empire.

For most individuals living in southern Africa, there is almost no connection between the Christianity that made history in North Africa, and the religion currently practised in this part of the continent. A look at the cultural and syncretistic elements that could have influenced the Christianity that emerged during the Early Church era, may yield a possible understanding of that Christianity amidst certain socio-cultural and political dynamics. This is done through an investigation of the interaction of the three factors that were formative to ecumenical orthodoxy, which are the schism, Hellenism, and politics. The schism referred to here, represents the separation of Judaism from Christianity, whilst Hellenism represents the syncretism of Greek philosophy with Christianity, whilst politics is represented by imperial intervention.

Throughout historical documents, ecumenical orthodoxy is seemingly engulfed within imperial Christianity. As this is only partially true, this dissertation is an endeavour to write an alternative narrative or 'story'. It appears that the idea of an orthodoxy that was shaped through the councils is bracketed in alternative views ranging from some that emphasized the political role of the emperor (Barnes 2011:125) and those that attributed to the formation of the orthodoxy found from post AD<sup>1</sup> 325 to ecclesiastical dynamics (Leithart 2010:179).

The research which assigns significance to the interaction between the factors under consideration – schism, Hellenism, and politics – which themselves are socio-political

---

<sup>1</sup> The Acronyms AD and BC has been used in the body of the research rather than CE and BCE.

dynamics, may well have deductive insights for the review of different eras of Christian history. In this particular case African Christianity (Kalu 2006) can be evaluated by models deduced from this study with regards to the impact of the interaction of politics and socio-cultural factors. The mentioned facts lead to a conclusion regarding the area of investigation. A review of the authors who have looked at the classical literature and interpreted the cause of the emergence of this orthodoxy, is therefore merited.

## **1.2 AREA OF INVESTIGATION**

In light of the background of the research, which is reviewing the interaction between the three factors that were supposedly resultant in the orthodoxy that emerged post AD 325, the investigation focuses on a specific era, that is approximately between AD 70 to AD 325. The events in this era formulate the factors mentioned in the topic. The schism was significantly conceived by events close to AD 70 (Josephus *Wars* 3.6; 5.2; O'Bannon 2016:1364;1403-1404). The focus is on events that served as catalysts to the formation of the particular Christianity that emerged during the period leading up to AD 325. The focus is in line with the objectives of the study to review the emergence of an ecumenical orthodoxy as a subject of these factors.

The timeline is justified, as it is in line with the hostilities between the Jews and the Romans that ensued from the decade AD 60-70 which was one of the major contributions to the Jewish-Christian schism (Josephus *Wars* 3.6; 5.2; O' Bannon 2016:1364;1403-1404). AD 325 is earmarked as the year for the first ecumenical council. The research is therefore a chronological review of early Christianity from the inception of the Christian-Jewish schism to the appearance of the Nicene orthodoxy (Eusebius *VC* 2.3; Cameron 1999:94). During this time the syncretism between Christianity and Hellenistic philosophy took place (Justin Martyr *Dial Trypho*; Nasrallah 2010).

The focus is also on how the Hellenisation of Christianity which could have been propelled by the schism (separation between Christianity and Judaism), served as a catalyst to the formation and emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy, that is post-Nicene Christianity. This is the second mentioned factor in the topic and also the basis for the hypothesis. The significance of the Hellenistic effects in the emergence of the

ecumenical orthodoxy are evaluated against the political influence of imperial intervention.

The research intends to show that imperial interposition (in the person of Constantine) was a catalyst to an already cultured movement – hence the role of Constantine is reviewed. This is done with the intention to weigh the influence of imperial politics against the transforming element of Hellenism as it was syncretised with Christianity, posing the question: Is the post-Nicene Orthodoxy primarily a result of the emperor's involvement or rather the emergence of a homogeneous Greco-Christian thought, given the oversight of the emperor? This becomes the probing question; its influence is the most significant of the three mentioned notions. There could possibly be a cause-and-effect relationship between these three.

This study is not an intrinsic review of ecumenical orthodoxy, but of the catalysts to its emergence. It investigates the causes of ecumenical orthodoxy rather than its nature and essence, with the assumption that the investigation will reveal the proper nature of the Christianity emerging during this era. The research acknowledges also the prevalence of other factors such as economic influence and migrations, as well as the potential of other emerging factors that could have resulted from the three factors under study.

### **1.2.1 Challenges foreseen and unforeseen (limitations to the hypothesis)**

Knowing that ecumenical orthodoxy was a coinage used primarily in reference to the later part of the Early Church era, it was a challenge to identify sources. Therefore the researcher has noted all literature that he could find referring to the orthodoxy and era under study. It must also be pointed out that the Hellenistic enculturation did not geographically affect every single country or area, as certain dominant cultures prevailed, such as the Syrian and Latin cultures that saw themselves as sources from which Christian philosophy or thought would flow (Roldanus 2006). Hence the study will also categorically review documents that relate to the geographical development of Christianity.

### 1.3 JUSTIFICATION

Orthodoxy defines the ontological nature of early Christianity trying to associate itself with the traditions of the time and thereby finding relevance in the Roman Empire (Mitchell & Young 2012:82). Eusebius, the church historian, stated that as from the fourth century onward the narratives about the growth of the church became defined by the subject of orthodoxy (Eusebius *Hist Eccl* 4; 5; Schaff 1885k:254, 322; Drake 2005:24). Hence a comprehension of what comprised of ecumenical orthodoxy or factors giving rise to it, is significant to the study of early Church History.

This also becomes an issue, which some scholars have called an over-simplification of the whole agenda and the many theories that surround the fourth century AD, such as 'Constantinianism' (Long 2013:100) and the birth of what appears to be a church-state relation that saw a new form of Christianity, or what can be termed an emergence of political Christian thought.

A view, attaching significance to the philosophical development of Christianity in the formation of Christian ideology, helps to refocus on Nicene Christianity, not only as imperial Christianity but rather as a syncretism between Hellenism and Christianity. This implies that this orthodoxy is a product of many centuries, beginning at the establishment of Christianity itself (c.f. Brent 2009:286; Leithart 2010:84; Drake 2006:413). There is also another view, namely that the orthodoxy (or Christianity that emerged after AD 325) is more a result of imperial intervention, thereby assigning much significance to it as a factor (Barnes 2011:111), which implies that this Christianity is a fourth-century phenomenon distinguished from the rest of the preceding Christian eras.

The name of the Roman emperor, Constantine, dominated the fourth-century church and so did a new dynamic of councils that came about, seemingly defining what Christianity ought to be. Hence a clear delineation of the roles of each of these factors at play will establish what ecumenical orthodoxy is: Is it politics or religious enculturation which came about as a result of the syncretised nature of the Hellenised Roman environment? The research aims to point out the main cause for the Christianity that emerged after the Nicene Council era, as this will also help designate



the appropriate name of the Christianity emerging at that stage. This leads to the formulation of the problem.

## **1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION**

As much as there could be no controversy pertaining the involvement and benefaction of the emperor to Christianity and councils in the formation of Nicene and post-Nicene Christianity, the primary research question that is, what contributed greatly to the orthodoxy that emerges post AD 325 still remains relevant.

### **1.4.1 Research question**

Which of the following influences can be seen as the main catalyst to the emergence of the ecumenical orthodoxy Christianity after AD 325: the schism, Hellenism, or imperial intervention?

### **1.4.2 Sub-questions**

The following sub-questions are identified:

- How did the schism between the Jews and Christians contribute to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy?
- Did Hellenism play a formative role in the emergence of the conciliar orthodoxy that appeared after AD 325?
- What role did imperial intervention play in the formation and establishment of ecumenical orthodoxy?
- Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy, or could there be other influences?

### **1.4.3 Aims and objectives**

An investigation of the interaction of these factors as formative of Christianity, especially during the period in review, will enable a revisionist account concerning Nicaea. In light of the potential implications of either of the mentioned views on the major influences on the formation of the Nicene or ecumenical orthodoxy, the research aims to find a balance between the three mentioned factors and consequential sub-factors, in order to

- justify why these specific influences (schism, Hellenism, and imperial intervention) are identified as the key issues in this investigation;
- emphasize the role of the schism as a propeller towards the Hellenisation of Christianity, since this has possibly left a vacuum that appears to be filled by Hellenism;
- analyse and evaluate the influence of Hellenism on Christian thought and orthodoxy, through an analysis of how ideas of homogeneity and uniformity evolved in the early Christian history, with Hellenism as a form of syncretism.
- delineate the role of politics in the formation of orthodoxy – a relook at the role of the ‘first Christian emperor’ and the myths and legends or fact as to his role in shaping the church and its theology through the councils.

## **1.5 HYPOTHESIS**

Since the analysis of historical data is an interpretation or a reinterpretation of obtainable materials, this section is central as to why the research is being done. According to Danto (2008:35), ‘a good hypothesis is the forceful central concept, the core of a good study that can be tested for reliability and viability’. The hypothesis is a significant aspect and feature of this research and will contribute greatly to the analysis.

### **1.5.1 Hypothesis defined**

Hellenistic enculturation propelled by the schism, contributed significantly to the form of Christianity/ecumenical orthodoxy that emerged after AD 325 – even more than imperial intervention. With this hypothesis in mind, it becomes arguable that, rather than just being a phenomenon of the fourth century, ecumenical orthodoxy is since its inception the result of a metamorphosis of Christianity, subject to multiple yet diverse exposures.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND KEYWORDS**

The most important concepts and keywords that are used in this research are defined here.

### **1.6.1 Orthodoxy**

It is a reference to an authorized or generally accepted theory, doctrine, or practice (Cross & Livingstone 2009). It could also refer to the quality of conforming to orthodox theories, doctrines, or practices (Cross & Livingstone 2009). Authenticity of belief and teaching weighed against some established standards of faith as opposed to heterodoxy or rather the official position commonly accepted and based upon certain authority. This definition is adopted and used here due to the fact that it transcends many eras in Christianity and it allows for an anachronistic use of the word, applying it to many periods in Christian history.

### **1.6.2 Ecumenism**

It can be defined as 'the principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian Churches' (Stevenson 2010), although in this study it is deduced to endeavours towards religious syncretism. This derivation is mostly used to explain the union of Christianity with heathen philosophy that existed during the second and third century, with certain apologists like Justin who wanted to synthesize Christianity with Hellenism.

### **1.6.3 Ecumenical councils**

This term refers to the gatherings of Christian bishops from all over the Roman Empire to regulate matters of faith and morals. The idea of these councils was primarily to imply a universal impression of uniformity (Edwards 2012:373). The council of note in this investigation is the council of Nicaea in AD 325.

### **1.6.4 Ecumenical orthodoxy**

Deriving from the ecumenical councils this is an orthodoxy affirmed by council creed like the one held in Nicaea in AD 325. It was understood in the context where it has been used anachronistically, slightly detached from eastern orthodox Christianity. The use of the term is justified within the trend in Christianity that emanated from the council predicting more councils to be convened under the influence of both the clergy and the emperor.

### **1.6.5 Hellenism**

Stevenson (2010) defines it as ‘the national character or culture of Greece, especially ancient Greece’ and ‘the study or imitation of ancient Greek culture’. It also included principles and ideals related to classical Greek civilization. In the research this primarily related to the philosophical enculturation that was part of the social matrix of Christianity. This has been deduced as an enculturating element that was formulative of orthodoxy and the texture of Christianity.

### **1.6.6 Imperial Christianity**

It can be defined as Christianity under the patronage of an emperor like Constantine (Demacopoulos. 2017:125)– in other words Christianity characterized by the influence of the emperor. In the research this name is characteristic of the era after Constantine as it became a dawn of a new intricate relationship between the church and the emperor.

### **1.6.7 Contextualization**

Contextualization can be defined as the acculturation of Christianity to its environment of either Hellenistic cultural or political influences (Roldanus 2006:6). It refers to the adaptation of Christianity – how it blended and took form in light of diverse variants – in order to survive.

### **1.6.8 Heresy**

Heresies are beliefs or opinions that are against the officially acceptable views (Collins 2012). This is the opposite to orthodoxy. The study of heresy becomes an antithetical argument for the hypothesis. The *Dictionary of the Bible* (Browning 2010) defines a heresy as follows:

From the Greek, meaning ‘choice’ or ‘thing chosen’, or an opinion. It came to be used (in the Greek) for a sect or a school of philosophy, and of the ‘sects’ of the Sadducees and the Pharisees in Acts 5:17; 15:5. It is used by Paul for a protest group in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:19) and for a typical kind of divisive action in the community (Gal. 5:20), where the word is on its way to its later designation of a deviationist group within Christianity.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Cross & Livingstone 2009), a heresy is

the formal denial or doubt of any defined doctrine of the Catholic faith. In antiquity the Greek word *hairesis*, denoting 'choice' or 'thing chosen', from which the term is derived, was applied to the tenets of particular philosophical schools. In this sense it appears occasionally in Scripture (e.g. Acts 5:17) and the early Fathers. But it was employed also in a disparaging sense (e.g. 1 Cor. 11:19) and from St Ignatius' letter to the Trallians 6 onwards it came more and more to be used of theological error. From the earliest days the Church has claimed teaching authority and consequently condemned heresy, following Christ's command: 'If he refuses to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican' (Mt. 18:17). On the other hand the need to rebut heresy has sometimes stimulated the formation of orthodox Christian doctrine.

This last definition is used in the research as it resonates with the study due to its coherence with the chronological development of the subject. It applies to Christianity from the first or second century AD.

#### **1.6.9 Schism**

This term refers to the separation of Christianity from Judaism as early as the first century AD (Nickelsburg 2003:194). It is generally understood as the schism in religious academic circles. It can also refer to the rift that emerged between Eastern Christianity and Western Christianity that emerged in AD 1054 entitled the Great Schism.

#### **1.6.10 Ceasaropapism**

Ceasaropapism is the idea of combining 'the religious power of secular government with the religious power, or making it superior to the spiritual authority of the church; especially concerning the connection of the church with government' (Pennington 2010:183-185). In the context of the study this is directly connected with the involvement of the emperor in ecclesiastical matters or administration of the church.

This meaning is deduced from the concept of the involvement of the emperor particularly in the first council of Nicaea.

#### **1.6.11 Constantinianism**

This is an idea based on the concept of the Constantinian turn or the influence of Constantine upon Christianity beginning from the inception of his reign and climaxing in the council of Nicaea (Leithart 2010:177). This term is coined by Constantinian scholarship in reference to the imperial influence of the emperor upon the church/Christianity.

#### **1.6.12 Enculturation**

It can be defined as 'the process by which people learn the requirements of their surrounding culture and acquire values and behaviours appropriate or necessary in that culture' (Stevenson 2010). It is also defined as an adaptation of the Christian message to native cultures (Murray 2018). A last definition refers to the influence of culture as a social factor particularly upon religion (own coinage). All the above definitions are used: The first one is mainly used in the sections reviewing antiquity and the early church and the other two primarily in the analysis, discussion and results sections where there is an additional review of the later periods. This is done because of the impact of the definitions on the respective investigations.

#### **1.6.13 Tanakh**

The Tanakh consists of the Jewish Scriptures of the Law (Books of Moses), the Prophets (prophetic writings) and the Writings (poetry and other literary works) (cf. Doran 1995:57). This term is an acrostic term that shows the composition of the Jewish spiritual Book. It was integrated into Christianity as it formed a significant part of what was termed 'Scripture' by Christians.

#### **1.6.14 Episcopal**

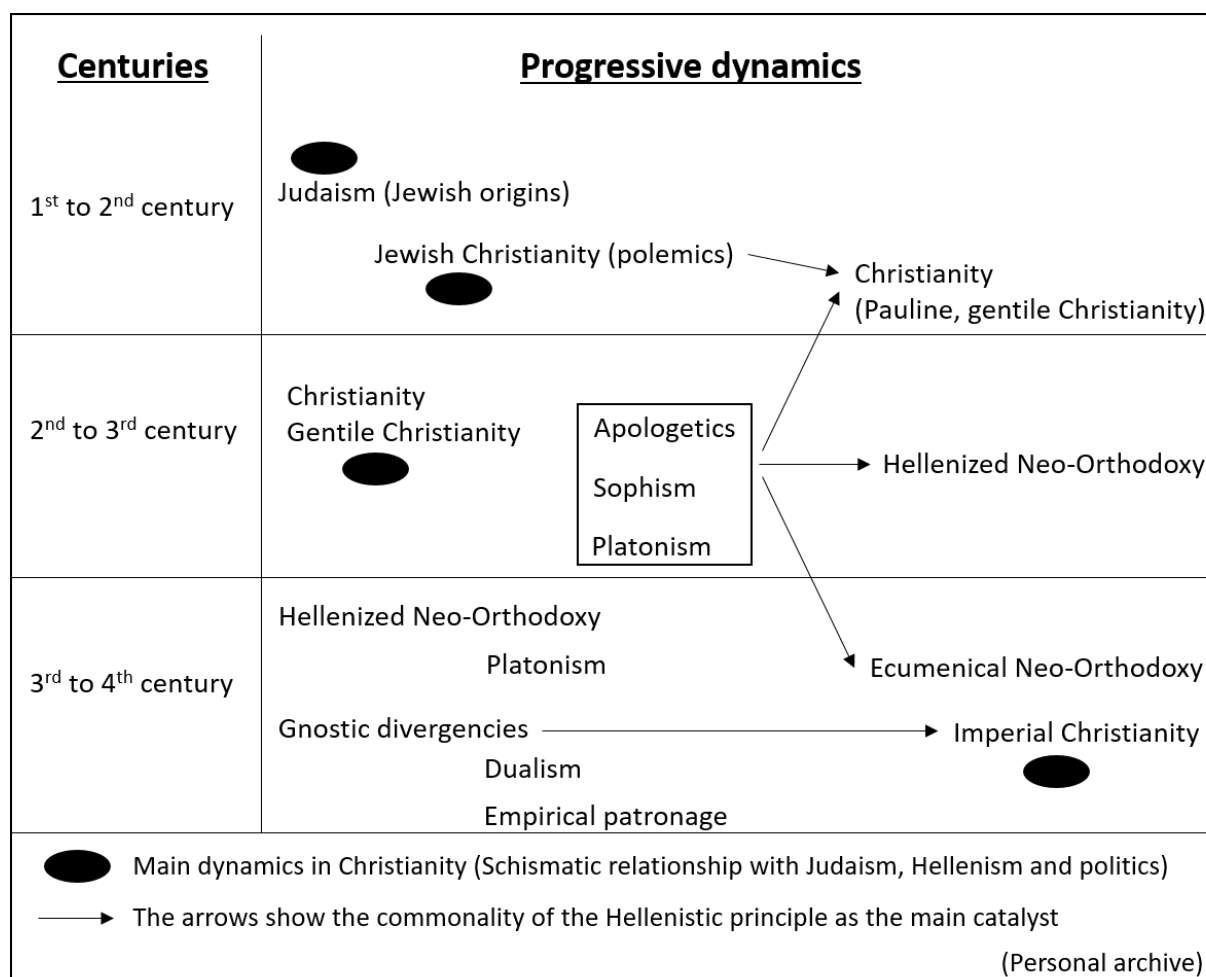
This term is used in the investigation, especially with regards to the study of the second to the fourth century, when it became an intrinsic element of Christian leadership. It refers to titles relating to the bishops, which was an office of leadership in Christianity (Moore 2011:14-15).

### 1.6.15 Self-definition/differentiation

The process of separative distinction as a religion/culture strives for particularity; religion therefore establishes itself distinctively as a unique movement or organization (Brakke 2012:245). This is established within the research to have been an intrinsic characteristic of Christianity. Self-definition becomes the process represented in the tri-sectoral phase that Christianity underwent through the different catalysts.

### 1.7 DIAGRAM 1

The diagram below explains the primary dynamics depicting the interactions and relationships between Judaism, Jewish Christianity, Hellenism, ecumenical orthodoxy, and imperial Christianity.



This diagram portrays how the three factors were at play in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. All the progressive dynamics are reviewed against the centuries in which they were most prevalent. As indicated, the oval shapes are representative of the

dynamics in Christianity (intrinsically Christianity itself). In the first century Christianity is depicted as a movement stemming from Judaism and hence as Jewish Christianity. Polemics from Pauline works caused the (further) alienation of this movement from Judaism as Christianity emerged as gentile Christianity from Jewish Christianity.

Between the second and third century the further alienation of Christianity from Judaism, as gentile Christianity through Platonism (elements of Greek philosophy), sophisms (second-century categorization of philosophy) and apologists (endearment to heathen philosophy and culture by Christian thinkers), became more inclined to Hellenistic philosophy – the blended result being a form of orthodoxy the researcher chose to call Hellenistic Neo-Orthodoxy; according to the research, this stage was greatly formative, resulting in the shade of Christianity that would later embrace the political element as a catalyst.

The arrows are indicating that the Hellenistic tendencies were also catalysts to the formation of Pauline gentile Christianity and ultimately ecumenical orthodoxy. The last row shows how the Gnostic divergencies coupled with the Platonism and dualistic tendencies, whilst embracing imperial patronage, saw the emergence of imperial Christianity/ecumenical orthodoxy or AD 325 Christianity – an orthodoxy so philosophically defined in its boundaries, yet also enforced politically through councils to avoid diversity.

## **1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter containing the background for the study. The significance of the subject of orthodoxy in early Christianity is an established view. Despite the preceding fact, the composition of the catalysts that saw Christianity emerge in this orthodoxy is, however, not beyond debate. The emergence of the orthodoxy that had developed after AD 325 appears to have been intertwined with the rising prominence of imperial involvement in Christianity. By focusing only on the significance of three identified factors that preceded the Nicene Council, namely the schism, Hellenistic enculturation of Christianity, and the involvement of Constantine, the research endeavours to establish the composite nature of the orthodoxy that emerged. The research also revises the established views with regards to Constantine, the aim being to show the significance of the schism in its relation to



Hellenistic influences upon Christianity and ultimately the emergence of a new ecclesiastical polity.

Chapter 2 contains the methodology being employed in the research, which primarily is document analysis. This is done in line with the nature of the investigation that is primarily a review. The research design which is both thematic and chronological in certain sections, has been justified according to the events preceding Nicaea. Other integrated techniques into document analysis have been explored in justification for their necessity in the investigation of catalysts, for example enculturation that entailed the integration of cultural historiography. The use of the methodology in light of its strengths is highlighted.

Chapter 3 is a literature review referring to scholars and how they defined Nicaea, based on the existence or non-existence of imperial involvement. The research positions itself in how it relates the schism to Hellenism and ultimately imperial involvement.

Chapter 4 starts the literature analysis section where there is a tri-categorical organization of the study under the three factors, schism, Hellenism and politics. This chapter reviews the impact of the schism upon the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy. That is how it served as the first catalyst to the whole process. The schism is reviewed not only as an inceptive event but as a progressive alienation. Document analysis as the main method is used to explore books, journals, conciliar records, and ancient records amongst others.

Chapter 5 is a continuation of the literature analysis, and reviews the second catalyst which is the Hellenistic enculturation in the continuum of the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. Hellenistic enculturation is examined for its acculturating significance in the exclusive emergence of orthodoxy and an ecclesiastical polity. The parallels with second-temple Judaism are explored.

Chapter 6 is a further continuation of the literature analysis, and reviews the third catalyst, which is imperial intervention of the emperor, Constantine, and its impact upon the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy. The link between imperial intervention

and the socio-ethnic enculturation that characterized the preceding century is here established as the ecclesiastical polity.

In Chapter 7 the research positions itself, given the informative continuum of the subject matter that is in Chapter 6. The informative continuum is made possible by a review of the implications that serve as background to the study, such as the councils and growing ecumenical power. This chapter is a deduced analysis section where implications that are a background to the study are reviewed. These emerged as the research developed and were explored as a subject informant to the study. The origin of councils and a phenomenon seemingly new to the hypothesis relating to ecclesiastical politics is introduced in this chapter.

Chapter 8 is the results section where the deductions from the study are analysed and the tentative answers to the question regarding the cause of ecumenical orthodoxy are put across. The chapter also uses a revisionist approach to revisualize the Constantinian turn and the Nicene narrative. The development of a model from the hypothesis is also a notable element of this chapter. This model is developed from how the study reviewed the interaction of the three catalysts and apply them generically upon similar eras.

Chapter 9 is the concluding chapter. A summary is made of the literature review and the document analysis and then the research findings are highlighted and synthesized. There is another model being developed as a synthesis of the hypothesis with the findings of the research showing the deduced understanding after the research rather than the proposed understanding at the onset of the research. The discussion also establishes the factors at study as a tool of analysing (heuristic model) post-Nicene eras as proof of the hypothesis. This section places the research in the progressive continuum of developments in Church History and theology and therefore highlights the general contributions of the study. The limitations to the research are also explored.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 introduces the study and supplies the background and arguments why the study is relevant. The continuing study of the period preceding the Nicene Council

brings more insights regarding the interactions of catalyst that were formative to Christianity. The aims and objectives are highlighted and the possible hypothesis explored. A diagram emphasizing the importance of the socio-cultural factors in the research – that is Hellenism – is introduced. The methodology used in the research is explicitly shown with regards to how it will be used. This leads to Chapter 2 of the research, which is an exploration and justification of the methodology used in the research. In this chapter the methodology and research design used in the study is explored and justified. The theoretical framework is also explained.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 1 an overview and background of the schism, Hellenism and politics as a review of the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy is done. There appears to be significant scholarship defining ecumenical orthodoxy as an imperial phenomenon, as acknowledgement and continuation of the Constantinian debate. The problem is formulated as well as the questions indicating the research focus.

The methodology being used in the study namely document analysis is explained and justified in this chapter. The first part explains and justifies the layout and organization of the study which takes the form of a topical analytical view, alternatively a revisionist attempt. This is followed by the explanation and justification of the methodology by means of document analysis. Then the integration of other techniques within the same method is explained.

#### **2.2 LAYOUT AND ORGANIZATION**

The layout and design of the research have been done being deduced from sources on historical studies (Saucier 2008:396-400). As Danto (2008:30) observes that the method and the intended reader will ultimately affect the research design, this research is mainly arranged in chronological sequence, though blended thematically with the topical method. This is accomplished in line with the type of research and the hypothesis. Given the organic and evolutionary nature of philosophy and thought, a development in Christianity would be one that can be viewed analogous to time. Since divorcing the development of ideology from the timeframe within which the ideology developed, would assign significance to insufficient catalysts or dynamics involved in the process of coming up with ecumenical orthodoxy. This is the reason why a chronological review of events beginning with the inception of Christianity, would trace the many multi-faceted variants involved in shaping Christian thought and form. The fact that the research is oriented as a review entails the preceding facts. The research, however, reiteratively takes a topical form with regards to analysis. The preceding

acknowledges the continual balance that is to be maintained in the research between historicity of facts as deduced from primary sources and deductive theological implications regarding the nature of the study.

Bradley and Muller (2016:85-86) have deductive insights with regards to the corpus' style and form, as well as the counter play between topical and chronological design. This particular research is shaped with specific reference to the evolving outline of the study. The preceding is made possible by document analysis and review. The topical design which also is instrumental in formulating a coherent narrative will be based on singular document reviews, intrinsically faces drawbacks of the possible insufficiency of the respective documents to balance historical, cultural, or social contexts single-handedly. Hence the design does not strictly adhere to one mode or form of layout, but blends the topical and chronological aspects. The mutual exercise of the two designs is contingent to the possible inaccurate deductions that could stem from employing a singular method of design.

## **2.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The strengths and weaknesses of the methodology are explored here. The relevance of sub-methods is justified against its use in the research.

### **2.3.1 Document analysis**

Reference is made first to this central and relevant method in the study of Church History: Document analysis is the systematic evaluation and review of documents – in this case qualitatively – by examination and interpretation in order to develop empirical information and deduce an understanding (cf. Bowen 2009:27). Book and journal reviews are primarily done, with reviews and analyses of ancient letters, council documents, and manuscripts from the era under study. The sources pertaining to the three categories are mostly secondary and tertiary.

Although document analysis is the main method used here, other features have been ingrained into this method to focus the document analysis on definite areas which are relevant to the investigation. For example, cultural historiography has been integrated to enhance the document analysis in the decoding of data in order to yield immediate

results to the investigation, which assigns significance to the Hellenistic enculturation as a catalyst. This – and more – is further elaborated on below.

### **2.3.2 Use of the method and its strengths**

The availability of documentation from the many sources makes document analysis a more viable and reliable method. The timeline under investigation consummating in AD 325 with the council of Nicaea, has inevitable implications for the sources being used. First, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* is crucial for its background information to the development of the Christian church, especially in the pre-Constantine and Constantinian periods – the translation of Maier (2007) is used. The translation of Cameron and Hall (1999) is used for Eusebius' *Life of Constantine (Vita Constantini)* with special reference to the correspondences between the emperor and the bishops during the councils and also as background to the imperial interposition, which is the third catalyst in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. The translation of Schaff (1885f) for Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* brings insights into the experiences of Constantine with Christianity. A wide variety of seminal sources are added to have a more recent analysis with some objectivity. There is a great amount of Constantinian scholarship who has analysed the primary sources extensively. Barnes (2011), for example, with his many titles, offers alternative translations to certain parts of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* and Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. Leithart (2010:159) offers a revisionist approach to Eusebius where he reviews the political role of the emperor against that of the bishops. On the schism the *Birkat haMinim (Curse on the heretics)*, which was the alienating prayer the Jews used against gentile Christianity, is reviewed as a primary source. Translations of Josephus' *Wars of the Jews* and *Antiquities of the Jews* are also useful in this regard. There is also a secondary work by Boyarin (2010) that reviews the thesis of Yoder on the schism, giving an alternative for analysing the Jewish-Christian schism.

Last, on Hellenism and its impact, the writings of the Church Fathers, particularly Irenaeus, Origen, Justin Martyr, Ignatius and many others, are useful seminal works that help to analyse and offer deduced views on scholars such as Brent (2009) on Ignatius and Cyprian's works. Brakke (2012), a renowned scholar on Gnosticism, is utilized on illustrating the issue of self-definition and contextualization in Christianity amidst the emerging divergent groups.

The research process itself does not affect the material being evaluated, inherently removing fears of compromised data analysis, since the nature of data being evaluated is not capable of being manipulated by the process of research (Rapley 2007).

Despite the many investigations on Constantine and this era in the history of the Christian church, the fact that documents are not necessarily altered by investigation, ensures the continued and stable use of the same data in repeated reviews. Hence it yields relatively stable results. In other words primary sources, being ancient documents, entail that the information derived from them after an investigation does not change their essence. The continuum of study on Constantine and Nicaea, for example, does not change the actual sources themselves, but rather helps develop revisionist approaches from the same documents. Unless there are new archaeological discoveries to disapprove of the information, the sources at hand remain as they were.

The preciseness of dates and names in documents entails the exactness of the research in many respects. Added to this is that the method enables the review of the era/epoch in Christianity against its background and surrounding events (cf. Bowen 2009:5, 14). This is significant to the study which seeks to review historical phenomena regarding the three catalysts, the Jewish-Christian schism, Hellenism, and politics. The time element of the research with regard to the era under review, that is from AD 60 to 325, entails that there should be accuracy of events and names. The significance of names and the development of certain ideologies and acts are established in research done on Marcion (cf. Doran 1995:68) and Justin Martyr (cf. Drodge 2012:230) – both of them are significant for their contributions to Christian ideology during the first and second century AD. The next step is to look at how the method is implemented, as deduced from Bowen, who is a scholar on document analysis, or alternatively on the justification of the use of the sources as mentioned above.

### **2.3.2.1 The use of method in analysing the documents**

Reaching a point to determine the basic primary sources or the relevant scholars needed for a review process, would help to establish the appropriate documents to investigate the schism, Hellenism and politics. The method entails an analysis to

establish the significance of documents, as well as their authenticity and accuracy. With the help of the research done by Bowen (2009:34), the following steps are followed:

- The first step is to establish the significance of the documents to the study in proportion to their usefulness in investigating the problem and establishing the purpose of the research, for example, after searching for documents that have any information on Constantine and the early church, those are selected that would assist in the area of focus, which is Constantine's influence upon the church – hence the use of books such as that of Leithart's defending Constantine and primary sources such as Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*.
- Second, to establish the authenticity and accuracy of documents used: The researcher had access to official and recognized sources in the form of the university library and the many databases available online. Therefore, the literature reviewed was from accredited sources.
- Third, to review a representative corpus of literature relevant to the research: An analysis of classics and authoritative volumes on the matter was done, for example, the Cambridge History of Christianity and Eusebius, amongst others.
- Last, to ensure comprehensiveness against selectiveness: This was done through a vast consideration in the selection of documents, with accessibility being the only limit.

#### **2.3.2.2 Coding of data**

The documents are basically coded under the dominant themes of the research – Hellenism, schism, Orthodoxy, and imperial Christianity or Constantine. The thematic coding ensures the ease of navigation throughout the study. The use of specific titles rendering details of respective topics makes the study easier. Added to this are the volumes of composite edited essays. The Cambridge History of the Christian church, for example, has respective essays that facilitate the expansion of several themes.

This summarises the intrinsic use of the method called document analysis. What follows, is a review of how document analysis can facilitate the categorization and analysis of information.



### **2.3.3 Document analysis through cultural historiography**

As already mentioned, document analysis is the method used in this research. In order to critically analyse the information deduced from the documents, other techniques like cultural historiography are ingrained. In light of the cultural implications that stem from the method, this technique is concerned with the influence of the 'multi-layered cultural systems in which the event occurred' (Danto 2008:17). The technique's importance derives from the prominence that is given to Hellenism from the outset of this study, as the three factors under consideration, namely schism, Hellenism, and politics, are socio-cultural dynamics. The multi-layered cultural phenomena in this instance can be equated to the three catalysts at play. This technique accomplishes this by examining not only the event, but also the vantage points of the participants. From this perspective, the establishment of ecumenical orthodoxy as a cultural narrative is reviewed.

By utilizing several ideological lenses on one event, one can deduce the many possibilities that arise from the different interpretations. Given how historical studies should enhance perceptions concerning socio-cultural and political dynamics that have made the world what it is and ultimately for the people themselves cultural historiography is very vital. Against this background, supplemented by a view of history as a multi-faceted aspect of human experience, deductions from this research are enhancing the capacity to handle contemporary issues such as religion (Danto 2008:17; Howell & Prevenier 2001:26,27).

This technique is relevant to the study which involves an examination of Hellenism and imperial involvement in the church, given the cultural and political nature of both features. The emphasis on enculturation and contextualization as an influence, becomes a potential model for contextualization in African Christianity. As an extension of methodology, stemming from cultural dynamics, the research has derived the two ideas of enculturation and self-definition which are explained below.

#### **2.3.3.1 Enculturation and self-definition**

In using the method of document analysis, deductions are made relating to the capacity of engraining other relevant techniques of which cultural historiography is one of them. As an extension of document analysis, inclined towards cultural

historiography, the concept of enculturation and self-definition enhances the review of sources, as it entails a categorization of documents or authors who are enlightening this dynamic as a component of all three phases of the catalysts reviewed in the research. It is evident that the two terms 'enculturation' and 'self-definition' continually recur throughout this study. The ideas of contextualization/enculturation as rendered by Roldanus (2006:6), Lieu (2012:214), Drodge (2012: 231-234), and Boyarin (2010: 3), have reiterated the self-defining nature of Christianity.

A cultural analysis of early Christianity was inevitable, due to its metamorphosis in response to the many dynamics it encountered. The development of an exclusive microcosm, inter-religion and intra-religion as the complex social matrix of Christianity, is developed through a delineation of borders with Judaism (Lieu 2012:214) and within itself appears to be as much a social issue as it is theological. Hence this became a technique of analysing historical information as this study has established the acculturating and self-defining nature of Christianity as a religion. To envision Christianity as an acculturating and self-defining movement, also implies the formulation of sociological models in order to explain and review events from a sociological perspective.

### **2.3.3.2 Sociological models**

Utilizing document analysis side-by-side with cultural historiography, establishes the integration of the sociological analysis of Christianity as derived from Grabbe (2007:119) and Meissner (2000:144). The inference of both scholars to a heuristic model and cultic process stems from a revisionist approach to early Church History with special regards to its cultural environment. A heuristic model is an implied instrument of comparison – in the case of literature study, the comparison of second-temple Judaism or sectarianism to Christianity is a worthy example. A cultic process refers to the sectarian behaviour in early Christianity as developed by Meissner (2000:144).

In the literature corpus, the analysis of the sectarian second-temple behaviour is instrumental to explain the development of exclusive orthodoxy claims and the dynamics of heterogeneous diversity against emerging homogenous practices. The preceding is illustrated in the rise of the Pharisaic sect and its consolidation to power

with inferred parallels upon early Christianity. The parallels were also against the socio-political background (Greek and later Roman occupation) and Hellenistic enculturation as a common factor in both religions. The employment of the models to analyse religious sectarian behaviour of Weber (1930), as well as Wilson (1970), is implied from a sociological approach to religious history. The deductions from Judaism and implications upon the Frankish era as noted in the results and discussion section, are also implied. The use of the model is also incorporated against the background of recent studies on the schism and Jewish matrix that hint on greater multiplicity and hence complexity of the formerly established social strata of the respective religions and periods (Lieu 2012:214; Boyarin 2010:3, 26-27).

The preceding observations with regard to the analysis of second-temple sectarianism and its implications on Frankish Christianity, are made whilst entailing care was taken not to superimpose the sociological/cultural ideology irrespective of primary evidence; the exercise of the method was therefore a resultant outflow from current reviews of the factors at study – current reviews like those by Lieu (2012) and Yoder (1984:136) who have revisited the Jewish-Christian schism and made revisionist conclusions, where they show the complexity of the Jewish-Christian social matrix. From this, the researcher has developed a sociological approach informed by papers on sectarianism in early Judaism, like that of Chalcraft (2007:56). These revisionist approaches are with regards to the schism and they have implications for Hellenism as they focus on socio-cultural phenomena which become the lenses through which the evidence is investigated.

However, a major problem is the bias that comes from the presupposition of the significance of culture in shaping narratives, which is also but one aspect or one catalyst amongst many other dynamics. Hence the research may have an inclination which may make the findings partial, given the emphasis upon cultural phenomena.

#### **2.3.4 Document analysis through descriptive research**

Descriptive research is also engrained in document analysis, in order to answer the questions of who, what, when, where, and how relating to what brought about the ecumenical orthodoxy (Given 2007:251-254). This, in line with the research, is useful information, because it is a review of the exact details of how Christianity and

ecumenical orthodoxy came to be in AD 325, how geographical location was instrumental in shaping ideas, for example, and how the West was more influential in councils than the East. Considering the role of Constantine, this information becomes descriptive in nature. In this case, the review implies an answer to the question how Christianity evolved from the Jewish religion.

Descriptive research facilitates a more focused study. However, descriptive research does not go as far as to give exact information on the why. On its own, it cannot disprove the significance of the Constantinian turn, as it is primarily a report on what and how. Also, descriptive research implies a heavy reliance on the respective instruments for making its observations, which entails credibility of data layers on the sufficiency of documents consulted for this research (Given 2007:251-254).

### **2.3.5 Document analysis through exploratory research**

Document analysis is used to generate new ideas through exploratory research (Cuthill 2002:79-89; Taylor, Streb 2010:372-374). It has enabled the researcher to gain a familiarity with the setting and environment surrounding Christianity, as documents were examined such as those that explore the cultural background. As the hypothesis seeks to downplay the significance of the Constantinian turn relative to the Hellenistic enculturation of Christianity, which itself becomes somewhat of a new concept, the method is very useful.

The integration of this method was mainly instrumental in coming up with the hypotheses. This was practical in the formulation of the research questions and in the expansion of the investigation. This approach is instrumental in gaining an understanding of the background to early Christianity and Judaism. It facilitates with ease the ability to address issues such as cause-and-effect relationship, what ecumenical orthodoxy entails, why it emerged, and how it came to be.

The anachronistic reference of the term 'ecumenical orthodoxy' and a review of Constantinianism, the Constantinian turn, and imperial Christianity, resonated well with the orientation derived from exploratory research. This method is elementary to the research as it is useful in coming up with distinct research problems and the creation of a formal yet tentative hypothesis. However, as noted by Cuthill, 'The

exploratory nature of the research inhibits an ability to make definitive conclusions about the findings, since these findings provide insight but not definitive conclusions' (Cuthill 2002:79-89; cf; Taylor *et al.* 2002:2377-2394).

### **2.3.6 Document analysis and the causal research design**

The causal design has also been useful in ascertaining the hypothesis as it helps to review the relationship between dynamics which could have emanated as a consequence of each other (Brewer & Kuhn 2010:125-132). In the investigation causal research facilitates an analysis of the schism, Hellenism and the influence of the emperor as co-relational catalysts. As the research is investigating an interaction of the three catalysts as a cause to ecumenical orthodoxy, this integrated design helps to establish the correspondent relationship between them, as the researcher has engaged different sources through document analysis and sought to establish the cause-and-effect relationship between the three factors and their relationship to ecumenical orthodoxy.

### **2.3.7 Document analysis and the great thinker model**

Deduced from Bradley and Muller (2016:26), this model is also integrated when periodical analysis of the development of the episcopate and heresiology was done, consequently resulting in a focus on the works of Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Ignatius. This implies that the integrated method facilitates document analysis to this regard. The integrated model implied focuses on the attributed patristic works renowned for contributions in the respective matters.

The model's main inefficiency originates from the significance it attaches to single contributions of an individual in the formation of ideology, rather than a more diverse comprehensive analysis. As noted by Bradley and Muller (2016:26), 'It is far more useful (and methodologically justifiable) to follow the history of ideas and the way those ideas develop and change in a particular time, noting the contributions of the various writers who contributed to the development'.

In the analysis of the development of heresiology, this method was useful specifically when reviewing sources like Irenaeus, Cyprian and Ignatius, as well as Justin Martyr

who was the model for Christian philosophy. This concludes the methodology implemented in the study.

## **2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The research as per the declaration made is the work of the researcher and complies with the copyright and plagiarism law as stipulated in the relevant codes. The nature of the research entails no contact with human participants or other life forms; therefore, the research was granted ethical exemption. The research endeavoured to keep in line with the policy on research ethics (Unisa 2015:4-6).

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

The organic and evolutionary nature of philosophy and thought imply that the development of Christianity merits a chronological review. In the review the many multi-faceted variants involved in shaping Christian thought and form are analysed topically.

Thematic coding of documents under the tri-categorical classification of Hellenism, the schism, and imperial involvement ensured ease of navigation throughout the study. This is done through document analysis. The integration of other methodological techniques enhances the document analysis. Two excerpts are mentioned below.

The multi-layered cultural phenomena as seen in the three catalysts at play imply the integration of cultural historiography as an added technique to document analysis. The different ideological lenses to one event facilitated by cultural historiography, enhance the review through different interpretations.

Through cultural historiography a revisionist approach to the schism becomes possible and so does a correlating study to Hellenism, the preceding being enabled by the focus on socio-cultural phenomena through the technique.

Added to the above-mentioned is a periodical analysis of the development of the episcopate and heresiology which is key to the study entailed, as well as a focus on the works of Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Ignatius, through the integrated great thinker model which entails a focus on the attributed patristic works, renowned for contributions in the respective matters.

The next chapter reviews ecumenical orthodoxy as established in the works of several authors and positions the research uniquely.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 explores the methodology used in the investigation and justifies its use. The analysis of documents is tri-categorized under the three catalysts. Ecumenical orthodoxy has been deduced by certain scholars simply as imperial Christianity (Wickman 2017:280) – hence many sources seem to emphasize the significance of imperial involvement.

Below is an exploration of the views of scholars with regards to their interpretation of the extent to which ecumenical orthodoxy was a factor of imperial interposition. The pre-eminence often assigned to the third catalyst of imperial intervention entailed this review in order to show the position of the research as a filler to the established viewpoints. This pre-eminence is possibly derived from the primary sources on imperial actions, such as Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and *Life of Constantine*, Lactantius' *Divine Institutes*, and other ecclesiastical histories. Hence the scholarship reviewed here poise their views as comparative deductions from primary sources on the emperor and Nicaea.

The prominent scholars that reviewed the emergence of AD 325 Christianity, established it as a factor of Constantinian influence, subject though to different degrees of imperial involvement. Consequently, as the different views are analysed, varying degrees of how much imperial involvement was significant in the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy implied the existence and possibility of other catalysts.

#### 3.2 THE CONSTANTINIAN QUESTION AND ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Research on Constantine has resurged time and again in historical studies. Perhaps the fascinating complex concerning the emperor is how he parallels Julius Caesar, the significant figure who heralded a new era for Rome as an Empire (cf. Van Dam 2011; Barnes 2011; Leithart 2010; Roth 2013; Long 2013). Whilst Julius Caesar emerged



from the triumvirate, civil wars, conquests, conspiracy and many turbulent socio-political forces, symbolically crossing the Rubicon to conquer Rome, Constantine in similar fashion at the battle of Milvian Bridge and then after Chrysopolis in AD 324 (VC 3; Lenski 2006:76) also gained sole emperorship from the tetrarchy. Constantine ushered the 'new' prefix to both a new rule and religion of 'Nova Roma' (New Rome). This, according to Van Dam (2011:245), explains all events that emerged from imperial Rome in Constantine's era of which ecumenical orthodoxy is consequent.

Yet to what extent the emperor entangled himself religiously, remains a dominant question. With an abundance of primary sources available, scholars have swayed between opinions as to how influential politics in the person of the emperor was and how much the influence of religion over the emperor was. Was Constantine converted to Christianity or was Christianity converted to Constantine? In the context of this question the research gains relevance. According to Leithart (2010:305), an oversimplification of the matter would never suffice. This led the established scholarship to a better conception of what the emperor actually did and what is claimed. In an attempt of delineating the emperor's role upon Nicaea and ultimately ecumenical orthodoxy, the scholars have vacillated on 'versions' of the characteristics of the emperor who oversaw the first ecumenical council.

### **3.2.1 How many Constantines? Degree of imperial influence upon AD 325 Christianity**

Schott (2008:124) has categorized the Constantinian scholars, using the example of Barnes (1981:245-261) and Drake (2000:286-287). He explains that the scholars are divided between those who either decipher within ancient texts an anti-pagan, or a religiously tolerant Constantine. Barnes, for example, being part of the traditional scholars, argues for a Constantine who was clearly anti-pagan and pro-Christian in the narratives of conversion. Constantine's letter *To the Palestinians/On Piety* was, according to Barnes, a foreshadowing policy statement with regards to his belief and practice, as it signalled the general ban on sacrifice. He regarded Constantine to be a religious dictator. This would have implications on the orthodoxy, consequent of a council overseen by this religious dictator (cf. Barnes 1981:245-261). However, it represents the traditional view which is revised in later titles by Barnes. As seen in his later work, Barnes (2011:141) emphasizes the political nature of the bishops as

intrinsic to how the Nicene saga played out; he also emphasizes the relationship between Constantine and the bishops. Both these observations imply that the emperor was not in totalitarian control of the council (itself a symbol of the ecclesiastical power structures).

Drake, in his analysis of Constantinian letters and rhetoric, uses terminology such as 'consensus politics', as defined by Schott (2008:124): 'The fostering of a tenuous entente among various Christian factions and *moderate* pagans'. This was an endeavour for an ecumenical/universal concord throughout the Empire cemented by religious toleration. For Drake Constantine's first letter was a consolidative statement in argument for monotheism, resonant with his newly found role as *liberator urbis* and *liberator ecclesiae* (*emancipator of the city of Rome and the church*), for through *in hoc signo vinci* (*through this sign conquer*) Constantine had saved the masses from the tyrants Maxentius and Licinius. He would be known thus, harnessing the massive wave of popularity which was not impendent upon him as an emperor, but rather as a scheming politician he would gather momentum, not only as a warrior emperor but as a hero of the masses.

The effectiveness of the *Nova Roma* Christianization agenda (which was the background from which Nicene orthodoxy emerged) in both cases would be measured by how obliteratedly hostile or passively tolerant the emperor would be towards paganism (Schott 2008:125). Schott also observes how in Constantine there was a convergence, an intersection of philosophy, paganism, politics, and theology. He deductively asserts that Constantine himself was subject to the philosophical enculturation process, as he cites how the emperor derived in Lactantian style from pagan philosophers in the construction of a pagan polemic. This argument seemingly further proves that the emperor was a subject in the melting pot of the enculturation process, whilst any involvement forthwith was as an inside element which, though divergent from the factors already at play, was not any more significant than the preceding ones – this thereby necessitates the study. Schott (2008:127) establishes the convergence in Constantine to be the 'marriage of rhetorical and legal/penal arguments made for particularly effective discourse of power and subjugation', an imperial ideology that would be derived from rhetoric, synced with politically convenient imperial force.

Kee (2017) emphasizes the need for a review of the Constantinian picture based on the primary evidence. Kee represents a revisionism of the Constantinian view. Enquiring concerning the religion of Constantine implies that to conclude Constantine's conversion to Christianity is an oversimplification; there can be a distinction of Constantine's devotedness to the God of the Christians and his actual conversion to Christianity (Kee 2017:23). Constantine's involvement with Christianity cannot be completely underlined as evidence for his conversion; however, a revised review of Eusebius' *Orations* or his *Life of Constantine* can yield new conclusions (Kee 2017:24). This further implies the necessity of a review.

### **3.2.2 Constantine and ecumenical orthodoxy**

A review of the scholars mentioned below shows the divergent views that combined to help reface a new Constantine with regards to ecumenical orthodoxy. It also delineates his role and function as a political catalyst in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy, whilst in certain cases proving the inevitability of other catalysts. From this the researcher deductively implements a model of conceptualizing Constantine and his impact on Christianity in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy, based on the different interpretations of the scholars.

#### **3.2.2.1 Imperial influence versus episcopal polities**

Brent (2009:286) portrays a semi-pagan Constantine who, although converted to Christianity, still borrowed from the pagan imperial tradition of blending metaphysical reality with the imperial authority and in that he saw himself as a religious benefactor. Brent also asserts that Constantine could not derive the *Pontifex Maximus* (high priest) role, citing the eminence of episcopal polity as a significant factor that made the emperor's political significance in ecclesiastical circles ineffective without the bishops. Brent's model implies, as is argued below, that the inevitable but complementary role of Constantine was composite to the enculturation process that also saw the emergence of the episcopal hierarchy. If anyone should be credited for the success and emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy, it would first and foremost be Cyprian (cf. Brent 2009:286). The bishops remained autonomously independent. Citing Rapp (2005) and Norton (2007), Brent alludes: 'It would be a mistake to see any radical, post-Constantinian, reconstruction of the roles of bishops and Synods so as to imagine

that these had become creatures of Constantine's Empire resultant of his policies' (Brent 2009:286).

### **3.2.2.2 Passive imperial influence for promotion of unity**

Leithart (2010), with regards to Constantine's drive in the Nicene agenda, has his own version of a subtle tolerant emperor. He seemingly conceptualizes the impact of the emperor upon the ecumenical orthodoxy question, which resonates with Drake's views as mentioned above, though Leithart himself critiques Drake's 'generalization' as he calls it. Leithart, just like the Donatists, portrays a prudent emperor who wanted to distinguish himself from the preceding tyrants (Decius, Diocletian, Maxentius, and Licinius, for example), in light of his liberator status. The emperor would strive for concord as much as possible, resorting only to violence to quell terrorism such as that of the Circumcellions (Leithart 2010:163). As the title of his book is *Defending Constantine*, Leithart defends the emperor's endeavours for concord, healing schisms, and facilitating a tolerant environment. Even with regards to legislation which later was actually codified in the *Justinian* and *Theodocian code*, Leithart argues that the codification distorted the imperial legislation as conceived by Constantine (Leithart 2010:198). He notes how the codified version of law was an editorial intended to echo a 'Constantinian tone', one that alluded to an angry emperor writing or decreeing laws into being. The body of the law itself would then be inconsistent. For Leithart (2010:200), 'imperial legislation often functioned more as moral exhortation than as a code', though, apparently influenced by Christianity, he concludes that Constantine's Christianized legislation was an overstatement. This rather was creating an 'atmosphere of public disapproval' (Leithart 2010:200) against corruption and gladiator fights, as this would see Rome *en route* to conversion as the *Nova Roma* with Christian *paedeia* (philosophic school). Hence in Leithart the research established a Constantine who was not imposing, but prudent, and strove for concord in Christian circles. Such a view of Constantine reshapes the Nicene narrative which is the climax of the research, as it incites a probe into the dominant feature of conciliar ecumenical dogma at Nicaea between the political and syncretistic elements that could have formulated this modus in Christianity.

### **3.2.2.3 Ecumenical orthodoxy as progressive imperial religious policy**

Alfoldi (1969) and Reuver (1996) represent a form of traditional scholarship. According to Alfoldi (1969:30), Constantine's religious policy was dynamic rather than static, with a three-dimensional category from his accenture after Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge to the uneasy peace with Licinius (AD 312-320), during which he seemingly became relaxed about polytheism. In the second stage, AD 320-330, Constantine confronts paganism/polytheism whilst having a major hand in ecclesiastics and syncing them with public life. The pagans themselves recognized how Constantine would be a *Novator turbatorque priscarum legume et morisantiquitus recepti* ('a wicked innovator and tamperer with the time-hallowed laws and the sacred ethical traditions of our fathers' – Alfoldi 1969:31). This revolutionary drive manifested itself in the imperial involvement in the church's unanimous homogenous agenda and was given the tremendous implications of unifying the Empire. Hence Alfoldi portrays the missionary Constantine as 'the angel', 'servant of the Lord' and 'Christ's thirteenth apostle'. This could incite a trajectory towards an all-dominating emperor at Nicaea and risks obscuring the preceding formative events of philosophy and schismatic displacement and entrenchment.

### **3.2.2.4 Ecumenical orthodoxy: Merger of ecclesiastical and imperial polities**

Drake and Barnes have been mentioned above and have also been analysed by Schott. However, Barnes significantly represents a traditional yet modern Constantinian scholarship, as he has authored over 20 titles on Constantine, making him a reputable scholar on Constantine's involvement at Nicaea. Barnes' acknowledgement of Drake's work on Constantinian ecclesiastical polity is in line with the deduction the researcher made that perhaps Nicaea/ecumenical orthodoxy should be seen as the dawn of the era of episcopal reign, consolidated through councils, political connections, and a universal imperial network. He has asserted that 'the Arian Controversy has close structural resemblance to modern party politics' (Barnes 2011:141). This observation which he attributes to modern research shows that the undoubted inevitability of Constantine was composite to an intricate formative era in Christianity and an allusion to imperial intervention, as an overarching theme called 'an oversimplification' by Leithart (2010:254).

### **3.2.2.5 Schism, Hellenism and politics: Emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy**

Many scholars have written about Constantine's role in ecumenical orthodoxy, according to the research of Roldanus (2006), Edwards (2012), and others. There seems to be a common consensus amongst traditional scholars like Alföldi (1969) and Reuver (1996) that Constantine had arrived on the turbulent scene in Christianity seeking to bring order in the unification of the Christian movement which was riddled by schisms and ideological divergences. Yet a closer look shows that it was no turbulent scene, but rather a formative process that not only preceded the era of the emperor, but that would autonomously progress and see the emergence of a new orthodoxy and aristocracy even beyond the emperor's benefaction. The dynamics at play enhanced by imperial patronage outlived the Empire itself and nonetheless became a new form of empire, a new form of kingdom with an episcopal aristocracy that would be entangled with monarchs in its agenda.

The implications of the work of Schott (2008) are significant for the research. Despite a seemingly 'well-documented' Constantine and Nicaea, a continual progressive review of the emperor amongst modern scholars like Barnes (2011) and Leithart (2010) has brought to view the massive implications on, amongst others, religion and politics. With the same impetus the researcher sought a review of the trajectory towards the Nicene conciliar/ecumenical orthodoxy, whose triumph was probably based on the formative catalysts. Perceptions and interpretations of the role of the emperor are redefining Nicaea in this case and elevate to view the role of enculturation propelled by the schismatic conceived anti-Semitism. Other complexities such as the formation of an episcopal polity (Brent 2009) that would derive authority from imperial patronage in the cultic and enculturation process that had seen its rise to prominence, are also investigated. This has led the researcher to review the inclination of attributing the enculturation process and its cultic implications as the main feature that conceives conciliar orthodoxy/ecumenical orthodoxy. The question is, Was the process avoidable or otherwise? Starting at the schism, it appears that inevitable events filled the trajectory of Christianity. Consequently, no factor or catalyst can assume importance above all in the formative process. These deductions favour a revisionist approach to the Nicene narrative and ascertain the significance of the respective catalysts. The development of new models to analyse the events leading to Nicaea also becomes inevitable.

### **3.2.2.6 Summary**

Imperial involvement as a catalyst to ecumenical orthodoxy looms large in significance amongst a predominant number of scholars. The review in this chapter entails a model that conceptualizes the Constantinian impact in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy, as derived from different scholars. For some scholars like Brent (2009:286) it was imperial polity through ecclesiastical polity that saw ecumenical orthodoxy through, whilst for Leithart (2010:311) the greatest involvement of the emperor was rather the promotion of Christianity or privileges formerly ascribed to paganism alone in Rome. Barnes (2011:141) attests to the inevitability of Constantine as a composite element in the formative era of Christianity where the emperor became the apparent reality amongst others already prevalent. These realities are evidenced by how they outlived the Empire itself and nonetheless forged a new order under the episcopal aristocracy.

This study therefore embarked on a review of the formative continuum of catalysts that saw the emergence of the Nicene conciliar/ecumenical orthodoxy. Through a revisionist interpretation of imperial involvement that found its climax at Nicaea, the possibility of other influences magnified the role of enculturation that was possibly incited by the Jewish-Christian schism. This also paved the way for other influences such as the formation of an episcopal polity (cf. Brent 2009:286) that derived authority from imperial patronage, yet owed its existence to the cultic and enculturation process.

Having done the above this takes the research to the actual literature study through document analysis where the three catalysts are explored. The first one to be reviewed is the Jewish-Christian schism.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE EMERGENCE OF ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The research objective, already introduced in Chapter 1, is discussed in full in Chapter 4. The literature, being discussed in the document analysis, is also analysed in this chapter. The research design and methods of engaging literature has already been explained in Chapter 2. Hence there is a topical categorization of themes. In this chapter certain conflicting views regarding the subject at study are discussed and a specific position will be taken regarding the outcomes. This is in line with the discussion of the research gap being discussed in Chapter 3 in the literature review.

The discussion flows along the lines of the three factors at study in their respective order – beginning with the schism, followed by Hellenism, and finally imperial intervention. Chapter 4 therefore mainly reviews the Jewish-Christian schism. The chapter begins with a prelude on ecumenical orthodoxy, which is the proposed result of the interaction of the three factors.

#### **4.2 ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY**

Ecumenical orthodoxy refers to the development of Christianity up to the council of Nicaea, or as the Christianity that was forged from AD 325 where councils began to play a significant role in the formation of Christian ideology. The research attributes the emergence of this form of Christian dynamic to primarily three elements: The Jewish-Christian schism, Hellenistic influence, and political intervention by the emperor. The emphasis is upon the idea of consolidation of Christian-Greek philosophical thought with imperial intervention mostly by Constantine. The intention of the research is to highlight the significance of the syncretistic element – the Hellenistic influences – in the formation of Christian thought, rather than the imperial influence. The idea of syncretism is explored under the sub-themes of contextualization and self-definition – these two terms being a reference to the acculturating and adoptive nature of Christianity in connection with Hellenism.



Interaction of the three factors proposedly saw the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy.

#### **4.2.1 Contextualization**

The issue of contextualization and the changing nature and form of Christianity is intrinsic to the study. Roldanus (2006:6; cf. Doran 1995:58, 66) argues that there is a process of contextualization of Christianity emanating from the Jewish schism, whilst Drodge (2012:230) refers to the enculturation to Hellenism, and Leithart (2010:171) to the political patronage from the emperor. These three authors are representative of the sources that have been cardinal for the review for each respective catalyst.

Roldanus (2006:6) establishes that the formation of Christian ideology and the emergence of the church through the multi-dynamics of cultural philosophy is but a matter of contextualization. In this line of thought one has to observe how, throughout the centuries leading to the fourth century, Christianity was exposed to the various dynamics and how it responded, whereas there have been certain views of history that attribute ultimately or significantly to eventualities as the main reason for the form or mode of Christianity at any given time. It is arguable that ecumenical orthodoxy since its inception is the result of a metamorphosis of Christianity, subject to the multiple yet diverse exposures, rather than being a phenomenon of just the fourth century.

Lieu (2012), Drodge (2012), and Brakke (2012) are asserting the same principle, styled as self-definition or self-differentiation, highlighting Christianity's response to socio-cultural dynamics, which was the evolving element in this movement. In line with this, the research attempts to assign much significance to how the interaction of the respective factors affecting Christianity gave form to the Nicene orthodoxy. The principle of contextualization/self-definition underpins all three the phases in this research. The three phases are themselves derived from the already mentioned catalysts – schism, Hellenism, and political intervention from the emperor. First of all the research examines the schism and its impact on the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy.

### 4.3 THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN SCHISM AND ITS IMPACT

Specific scholars and primary sources are used to review and analyse early Christianity and its Jewish background, as well as the schism that took place between them. Vermes (2012), a scholar on Judaism, is used to highlight the Jewish background of Christianity. Doran (1995) systematically analyses how Jewish Christianity severed ties from its Jewish roots to become a gentile Christianity. Marcus (2012) is reviewed on his conceptualization of Jewish Christianity. Primary sources referring to the emerging gap between the Christian and Jewish ideologies are the *Nag Hammadi* codice, called the *Two Ways*, and the Christian *Didache*. Marcion's *Antithesis* is analysed as an ignition to the alienation of Christianity from Judaism. Klawans (2012) is discussed for his analysis of the impact of hostilities between the Jews and the Romans in the build-up to the momentum that entailed the schism; Josephus' classic works *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Wars of the Jews* are reviewed to the same effect. Van der Horst (1998), a scholar on the *Birkat haMinim*, was reviewed for his analysis of the impact of prayer – against the observations of Marcus (2012) regarding the Jewish and Christian matrix. Excerpts from the *Talmud* are reviewed to ascertain the impact of the hostilities between the Romans and the Jews.

The works of Boyarin (2010) and Yoder (2003) are useful in formulating a revisionist approach to the Jewish schism that enhances the view that the schism served as impetus for the Hellenisation of Christianity as a filler for the socio-cultural gap derived from the schismatic elements. In the same line Lieu (2012) is used to enhance the concept of schism as an inception of the self-defining path of Christianity from which the ecumenical orthodoxy ultimately emerged. The well-known Jewish scholar, Nickelsburg (2003), is used for his analysis of the impact of the schism.

The first element of the contextualization process (which led to ecumenical orthodoxy) to be explored, is the schism, which is the separation of Christianity from Judaism – this being part of a journey of self-definition. As Christianity severed ties with its Jewish roots, it appears that there arose a need for enculturation, and that vacuum would be filled by Hellenism. Below is a review of Vermes (2012) on that matter.

#### **4.3.1 Christianity's charismatic Judaic foundations**

According to Vermes (2012), Christianity had to avert its Judaic foundations in order to bring about a schism. He argues that Christianity rose from a charismatic Jewish descent, related to the charismatic Judaism of Moses, Elijah, Jesus, and Hanina ben Dosa, amongst others (Vermes 2012:27). This charismatic religion was notably inconsistent with structure and form. Vermes (2012:25) gives an example: legalities, such as those of the Levites, priests, and rabbis, as reflected in the Mishnah and Talmud, were never nurtured in the environment of charismatic Judaism. The implication of this observation hints at the inevitable connection between Christianity and Judaism, citing a charismatic nature as impetus for the spread and growth of the religion. With this he clarifies the nature of the growing Christianity regarding its conceptual phase. Later on a changing socio-cultural dynamic is brought about by Hellenism, appearing as an alien element, perhaps replacing an inherent feature from Judaic roots. Vermes (2012:62) calls this form of Christianity, a 'Nascent Charismatic Christianity', because of its charismatic connection to Judaism and its innovative nature as a new dynamic. He coined this term with reference to the church in the early decades of Christianity (AD 30-70) (Vermes 2012:62).

With this, Vermes emphasizes the Jewish origins of Christianity and charisma as a major catalyst of growth and spread for this movement. This established the continuity of Judaism within Christianity, given the great Jewish population at that point in time. When the schism was inevitable, Christianity would begin to embrace Hellenism to a greater extent. According to Vermes (2012:63), the major difference between the different churches was in their geographic composition which formed the settings of the Jewish-Christian communities. When Christianity commenced, Jerusalem, and not Galilee (the homeland of Jesus), was central to this movement. The fact that Judaism also claimed Jerusalem as its holy city, had obvious implications on the ethnic cultural complexion of Christianity. The church in Jerusalem acted as a model community according to Acts 2, and had similarities in practice with the Essene-Qumran sect (Vermes 2012:63).

According to Vermes, the schism was also coupled with connections between Judaism and Christianity. That is how Christianity at first had derivatives from charismatic

Judaism and then deviated from it when the schism took place. These features were catalysts to the rapid spread of Christianity (cf. Vermes 2012:62).

It seems to be obvious that this strong connection between Judaism and Christianity has made the schism inevitable, if ecumenical orthodoxy was to be a reality. The Christianity that would sever itself from its Jewish connections would gradually take on a different Hellenistic shade. The 'Nascent Christianity' of Vermes covers the timeline of Christianity up to AD 70 – the year in which the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy emanated. A word of criticism against Vermes is that he does not explicitly establish the self-defining process, which would significantly see the development of a distinctive identity of Christianity and hence the impetus of separation between the two movements. Further, the version of the schism by Vermes lacks emphasis upon the active engagement of Christianity with Hellenism, since his emphasis is rather on the Jewishness of Christianity and its depletion. This is complemented by other authors like Doran (1995).

#### **4.3.2 The schism as active alienation**

Doran (1995) concurs with Vermes on the many parallels and similarities between Judaism and Christianity, though he argues that it was an active alienation between the two, and an endearment to Hellenism through anti-Jewish polemics and pro-Hellenistic apologists that factored the schism more than a simple deviation from roots.

Doran (1995:57) argues that the Christian worldview was very similar to that of Judaism, to that extent that first- and second-century Jewish apocalyptic writings were edited by Christian authors to make them Christian. Some literature, like *Joseph and Aseneth*, could be either Jewish or Christian, whilst the Christian *Didache* (6.1-3) resembles the Qumran *Two Ways* document (Draper 2010:12).

Despite this, Doran notes that more interaction between Christianity and gentiles made the relation with Judaism weaker. Added to this was the hostility of the Jews towards Rome, as is clear from the bar Kosiba uprising, which prompted certain Christian authors to begin with an anti-Semitic sentiment, like Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (Doran 1995:57).

As Christianity began to lose its Jewish flavour, there was a rise in treatises against Judaism 'that became almost a stereotyped genre' (Doran 1995:58); examples are the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*, *Dialogue of Simon the Jew and Theophilus the Christian*, Tertullian's *Against the Jews* and Origen's *Against Celsus*.

In agreement with Doran (1995:58), this study has established that the Christians' alienation from Judaism did set the stage for the remodelling of Christian ideology mainly under the influence of Greco-Roman philosophy. Added to this, the severing of ties between Christians and Judaism implied a gap in identity that left a cultural and worldview vacuum. In accordance with this hypothesis, Christianity was propelled into Hellenistic thought. Consequently polemics gave rise to a new Christian Greco-Roman apology emanating philosophical arguments, heresies, and the emergence of a neo-orthodoxy. This would be an endeavour to find a place for Christianity in the Roman religious culture.

Doran (1995:66) states how socialization is an important process in learning how to adapt to an environment; he therefore postulates that Christian intellectuals endeavoured to deduce a new Greco-Roman thought with Christian lenses. This argument is in correspondence with the issue of contextualization already mentioned; it correctly assumes that the schism was not a detached event, but rather an element in a continuum that would see the emergence of Hellenised Christianity and ultimately an ecumenical orthodoxy. Doran's view of the causes to the schism therefore becomes comprehensive and enhances the view of what took place after the schism. This process of socialization also purportedly saw Christianity diverting from Hebraic literature.

#### **4.3.3 Deviation from Hebraic literature**

Doran (1995:66) asserts that, despite the hostile trend against Judaism, Christians undisputedly had a Judaic descent and they inherited a body of literature from Judaism, like the Tanakh – an acronym for the Torah (Law of Moses), the nebi'im (prophets), and khethubim (writings) – mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16. Yet with second-century Christian scholarship the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament, with variations in composition with the Tanakh, became more popular.

Despite the fact that there were Christian groups that promoted a harmony with the Jewish tradition, Christian scholarship started to propose a different interpretation style that would also be uniquely Christian. Doran (1995:66-68) mentions the Ossaeans, Nazoreans, and the Cerinthians who still wanted to embrace circumcision. Epiphanius ridiculed them as deluded sophists, whilst Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with Trypho* questioned the salvation of one who keeps the Mosaic Law and hinted that these people should not teach others how to be saved. Nickelsburg (2003:194) went so far as to assert that the schism was a departure from the Torah.

All these facts enhance the understanding of the source of the schism. The fact that there was a different interpretation style and deviation from the Torah implies the inevitability of a substitute for this central element by Christianity. The philosophical and worldview gap left by a departure from the Torah would have to be filled and this led to the Hellenistic enculturation process. The separation between Judaism and Christianity caused the emergence of a divergent thought system, where Christianity was seen as a heresy.

#### **4.3.4 Polemic emergence of heresy**

The *Antithesis* of Marcion (the heretic) and the *Nag Hammadi* texts are proof of the divergence between the ideologies of the Christians and the Hebraic literature. These documents are assessed here to ascertain the type of continuum that they conceived with regards to the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

The anti-Semitic sentiment grew to an outright rejection of Judaism. This rejection saw the birth of a new Christian ideology identifiable primarily through its anti-Semitic stance, the extreme which Christianity itself labelled as heresy. Marcion's *Antithesis* posed as being Pauline, whilst dichotomising the Old and New Testament. He also made a distinction between the two Testaments' deities – the God of the Old versus that of the New. Marcion's refusal of the Gospels found much substance in how he claimed that the genealogy of Jesus' Jewish elements was evidence of its perversion by Judaizers. The very essence of Marcion's theology was as an opposition (Doran 1995:68). Doran bases the deviance of Marcion on his association with Gnosticism. However, this assumption implies that mainstream Christianity disowned the anti-Semitic sentiment as heretical, actively alienating itself from Judaism. Contrary to

Doran (1995), Marksches (2003:86) argues that Marcion was not necessarily attached to the history of Gnosticism, but he was simply a radical Christian thinker.

Another example of literary works reflective of the alienating ideology is *The Secret Book according to John*, a work some have associated with the *Nag Hammadi* library (Doran 1995:68). The work attempted to rewrite the Bible book, Genesis, and the origins of the world, with a Greco-philosophical twist that shows a kinship to Hesiod's theogony. Apart from the fact that it was written in Greek, this 'secret book' is evident of an alienation from Hebraic thought and an affiliation with Greek thought (1995:68). Furthermore it was a work attributed to a pseudo companion of Paul, attested as *The Teachings of Silvanus* (NHC 7.4; Freke & Gand 2001:251). In this work there is a polemic against the creationism found in other documents of *Nag Hammadi* (116.5-10) which was associated with Antony, the father of Egyptian Monasticism (Marksches 2003:50).

This observation of Marksches (2003) concerning the association of the schismatic continuum with Monasticism, is in harmony with Doran and entails that even amongst the new anti-Semitic views there were divergent thoughts. This implies the degree in which the schismatic endeavours of a new ideology differed from each other. Having therefore put the different views on an evaluative index, there could have been tempered anti-Jewish sentiment with others, whilst some would be extremely denunciatory. The ultimate impact is that of a schism built through an alienating momentum in redefining the Christian worldview.

#### **4.3.4.1 Cumulative build-up of the argument**

This section is an interaction with the above-mentioned scholars and an attempt to establish the argument proposed in Chapter 1 as a new dynamic to an understanding of the origins and nature of the schism, its relational cause to the Hellenising of Christianity and ultimately ecumenical orthodoxy.

According to Roldanus (2006:3), adaptation to the cultural environment was formative to Christianity. The schism, Hellenism, and ecumenical orthodoxy emanated from this process. Vermes (2012:25, 27) and Doran (1995:58, 66) affirm the Hebraic origins of Christianity, arguing that the schism was a factor of active alienation between Judaism

and Christianity, where Christianity changed its charismatic Jewish tendencies or its Jewish worldview.

The researcher has concluded that alienation from Hebraic thought propelled Christian thoughts towards a Hellenistic worldview. This was made possible by a reinterpretation or an outright rejection of the inherited Jewish roots. Despite the difference in degree to which Christian authors and scholars were willing to part with Jewish elements, the overall assessment was that of alienation, which would be composite of Christianity throughout the centuries. Ultimately this would lead to the founding of heresiology. Due to the undertones of philosophy in the new ideologies such as Gnosticism, it only became reasonable why a philosophical response was inevitable. What would now delineate proper practice and belief against that which was not, would primarily be a philosophical interpretation of Scriptures. This trajectory would usher in orthodoxy as simply philosophy countering a more divergent philosophical view.

#### **4.3.5 Departure from Jewish Christianity**

Whilst Doran and Vermes approached the schism as a matter of Christianity severing from its charismatic Judaic foundations, as well as a deviation from the Hebraic worldview (already discussed), the *Shepherd of Hermas* and contemporary author Marcus (2012) attest to a certain dynamic of Jewish Christianity. The existence of Jewish-Christian Gospels and critiques of Jewish practices attest to the reality of Jewish Christianity, with works such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* showing elements of Jewishness in Christianity. There are many similarities between the apocalyptic nature of the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Hellholm 2010:215-238) and Jewish apocalyptic documents like the interpretive dialogues in the *Book of Visions* (1.14.2; 2.4.1) (Schaff 1885b:13,16). As noted, earlier comparisons between the *Didache* and the *Two Ways* also show many parallels. Marcus (2012:97) observes how bishops like Ignatius of Antioch showed resentment to a faith he deemed to be heavily indebted to Judaism, whilst he would act positively towards Christology – this was despite his emphatic use of the *Book of Visions* to emphasize Christian unity (Brent 2009:21). Though Jewish Christianity later acquired the status of heresy, its dominancy is notable up to the middle of the second century. Seemingly the debate concerning the influence of Jewish Christianity became somewhat geographical, according to literature, with Asia Minor as one significant location.



According to Marcus (2012:99), the eclipse of this form of Christianity can be attributed to the Jewish-Roman hostilities against the three revolts, which made the Jews a public enemy and also saw the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of the temple was a double blow, because of all its symbolic significance amongst both the Jews and the Jewish Christians – it forced them to depart from the birthplace of the Torah. Observing Judaists obstructed the cause of Jewish Christianity. This contributed to the eclipse of Jewish Christianity and the emergence of gentile Christianity. Gentile Christianity alienated itself from Judaism ultimately this led to the schism. Gentile Christians severed themselves from Judaism, seemingly embracing another worldview.

Although Marcus (2012:99) alleges that the Jewish revolts benefited Jewish Christianity, Klawans (2012:182) argues that the revolts strengthened Judaism, rather than weakening or strengthening Jewish Christianity. This is just one example of how scholars differ from each other relating to the schism. Klawans (2012) bases his argument on both the Mishnah and Josephus and argues that after AD 70 the destruction of the temple caused a consolidation of Rabbinic Judaism, which would then regroup as ‘a newly embraced phenomenon of statutory prayer’ (Klawans 2012:182). The schism benefited from both a new form of Christianity that emerged, that is a gentile Christianity and a new phenomenon in Judaism, that is Rabbinic Judaism.

Marcus deduces that the demise of Jewish Christianity incited the schism, whilst Klawans argues that a rejuvenated Rabbinic Judaism, through its self-defining implications, was the major cause of the schism. Whilst both these arguments portray an alienation between the two institutions, the researcher wants to emphasize the fact that this alienation functioned as a propeller for Christianity towards Hellenistic philosophy, which would ultimately determine the new form of Christianity. The researcher derives this argument from the fact that the alienation that took place between Judaism and Christianity, resulted in a socio-cultural vacuum that needed to be filled and in turn Hellenism rifted the gap. The hostilities between the Jews and the Romans were a reason for alienation between Christianity and Judaism, as will be established from several authors below.

It can be deduced from history that the Jewish revolts compelled Christianity to actively dissociate itself from Judaism, whilst endearing itself to Hellenistic tendencies. Rajak (2012) and Lieu (2012), both scholars on Jewish and Roman antiquity, review how the uprising led by Bar Kochba (who called himself the prince of Israel) together with other revolts, intensified hostilities between the Jews and the Empire, thereby eliciting imperial action. According to Cassius Dio, the continued revolts of the Jews in Cyrenaica, Cyprus, and Egypt, perhaps with messianic inspiration in AD 115-116, further worsened the hostilities between the Jews and the Roman authorities (*Cassius Dio* 68.32). Ultimately during AD 132-135 (Lieu 2012:214) Bar Kochba, with rabbinical backing (Rajak 2012:67), led a Palestinian revolt, which saw the emperor, Hadrian, establishing Jerusalem as a pagan city called Aelia Capitolina, with the cult of Jupiter Capitolinus on the temple site.

Hadrian ideologically had alienated Judaism from Jerusalem and the process would ultimately see it becoming a *religio illicita*, despite the efforts of later emperors such as Antoninus Pius, to endear Judaism (Rajak 2012:67). It would therefore be sensible for Christianity to self-define itself against Judaism, as a means of survival. The researcher has established that the revolts were a deteriorating factor in Jewish-Christian relations, shaded both ethnocentrically and nationalistically. This anti-Christian sentiment would also shine through in the *Birkat haMinim*, a prayer that was a result of Jewish retaliatory behaviour.

#### **4.3.6 The *Birkat haMinim* (curse on the heretics)**

Despite the fact that Marcus (2012) and Klawans (2012) differ slightly regarding the immediate cause of the schism, both of them give prominence to the *Birkat haMinim* as another alienating factor between Judaism and Christianity. Marcus (2012:100) asserts that the emergence of the *Birkat haMinim* as part of the synagogue prayer, incited the alienation. In this prayer against the heathens or heretics, the rabbis added the curse on the heretics as part of the *Eighteen Benedictions*. As noted earlier by Klawans (2012:182), this institutionalisation of a statutory prayer was an endeavour for the unification of the many devastated and scattered Jews, a regroup ideologically against those that sought to extinguish Israel ideologically or physically.

The *Birkat haMinim* was an outright curse against the enemies of the Jews. Because the Jewish Christians had adopted Christology, which impugned the Jewish understanding of a monotheistic religion, they formed part of the accursed group (Marcus 2012:101), which obviously fuelled their alienation from Judaism. Despite the significant influence of Jewish Christianity, it faded in light of the popularity of Christian thinkers like Paul, Justin and Irenaeus, who showed that Christianity did not need the hurdles of certain Jewish practices such as circumcision. Whilst works of Paul depicted a Judaism to reckon with, those of Justin showed one struggling to keep up with an upcoming Christian thought. Both these views show an apparent departure from Judaism and a drift towards what others would call, gentile Christianity (Marcus 2012:101).

In refuting heretics, Irenaeus, who had much to say about Gnostics, devoted significant proportions of his writings to Jewish Christianity (Marcus 2012:101). For Marcus this was the last factor causing the eclipse of Jewish Christianity and the emergence of gentile Christianity.

There are, however, different opinions regarding the *Birkat haMinim*, which are explored below.

#### **4.3.6.1 Alternative viewpoint on the impact of the *Birkat haMinim***

Reviewing the above observations of Marcus, one could conclude that the alienation from Judaism and the challenges for Jewish Christianity all point in a direction where Christianity, by undoing much of its Jewish heritage, would have to be redefined. Below is a revisionist view done by Van der Horst (1998).

Van der Horst (1998:118), after reviewing several scholars on the *Birkat haMinim*, observes that, because of the technicalities that formed part of the curse, one could identify different targets of it. The attempt that was once there to ascertain what the original really implied, is flawed, according to him, because, for example, Schechter's Palestinian Genizah, one of the esteemed sources, was nine centuries removed from the primary sources of Gamaliel II and Samuel the Little. Maier argues that this was insignificant, since the thematic form of prayers was pretty much fixed. He asserts that the *Birkat haMinim* was not primarily an anti-Christian tirade, but rather a Jewish

regrouping after AD 70 against external forces threatening its essence both internal and external (Van der Horst 1998:119). Although Christianity (both Jewish and gentile) was seen as a threat to Judaism, the researcher argues that the *Birkat haMinim* as an anti-Christian document was not meant to deteriorate the prevalent Jewish-Christian relationship.

#### **4.3.7 Revisionism and the significance of the schism**

Yoder (2003:31) has revisited the schism between the Jews and Christians. His views bring the argument of the research that the schism incited Christianity on a path of self-definition, which consequently brought in the acculturation process and ultimately a superstructure with councils at the centre of its power, in question. These views are considered in order to avoid an oversimplification of the matter. The argument used by the researcher inclines more towards the traditional view of the schism. The idea of self-definition is added to ensure that the research does not base its hypothesis on facts distant from the ongoing development in information. The arguments of Yoder (2003) requires a further review of the distinctions between Christianity and Judaism, hence laying the foundation for an evaluation of the impact and significance of the schism and its implied hostilities.

##### **4.3.7.1 Yoder and the differentiation of two groups: An alternative perspective and analysis**

Boyarin (2010) has reviewed Yoder's book, *The Jewish Christian Schism Revisited*, where Yoder (2003:31) asserts that in the literature on schism between Judaism and Christianity there is a challenge in the modus implemented to distinguish the two groups. Even the progression in understanding concerning the matter would not be as divergent, but rather make slight adjustments to an acceptable standpoint of analysing the two groups. He therefore argues for an alternative perspective.

Boyarin (2010:2) who shares the sentiments expressed by Yoder, argues for an intricate complexity of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. For him both these groups had identity crises, as there was no normative Judaism or Christianity at that stage. Non-Christian Jews endeavoured to self-definition within a 'discursive world which was being dramatically changed by the noise made by Christians in the form of "New Israel", "true Jews", and "heretics"' (Boyarin 2010:3).

The standard account that portrayed the two exclusive institutions and developed until their separation, according to Boyarin, was a travesty of the apparent facts. In credit to Yoder's revisionism, Boyarin (2010:4-5) adds that there could have been no definitive form of Judaism capable of the claim, whether temporal or phenomenological, before the publication of the Mishna that implied the inception of the rabbinical period in the early third century. Yet he goes further that even then the publication of the Mishna itself was an endeavour towards Judaic orthodoxy, which is alleged to have been reactionary against the emergence of a Christian proto-orthodoxy. Consequently Yoder (2003:43) substantially places the schism in the second and third centuries, whilst Boyarin (2010:6) urges for the fifth century. Yoder (2003:66) also hints on the fifth century, perhaps in harmony with Becker (2003:373-392), who implies that the environment of the new Roman Empire has been a catalyst shaping the schism.

These considerations about Christianity and Judaism point to the complexity of the schism due to the not so distinguishable boundary lines between the two institutions. The assertion by both Yoder (2003) and Boyarin (2010), assigning the schism to be in a later century, would entail certain implications on the research, such as a complete nullification of the hypothesis that the schism was inceptive of the Hellenistic acculturating process that Christianity underwent. This can be placed against the emphasis of Klawans (2012) and Marcus (2012) on gentile Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, which hinted on a formation of the first and second century, due to the hostilities between the Jews and the Romans and the implications these conflicts brought about. This is because the role of the preceding factors has been examined as a cause for the schism.

Regarding the alternative revisionist viewpoints to the schism and the traditional view, the research adopts a middle approach, emphasizing that the alienation between Judaism and Christianity was more significant to the argument of how Christianity was propelled towards a Hellenistic acculturation and modelling itself as a philosophy. This view is rather a synthesis of the two opposing viewpoints. Another factor was the impact of the year AD 70.

#### 4.3.7.2 The impact of AD 70

Klawans (2012), a scholar on Jewish and Roman antiquity and especially the writings of Josephus and the Mishnah, discusses the impact of the hostilities that culminated in the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Research has assigned significance to this destruction and relatedly to the Bar Kochba uprisings in AD 135. Klawans (2012:181-207), in a comparison of Josephus' writings with the Mishnah, revisits standard approaches with regards to the destruction of the temple. In his research, AD 70 was established as a significant milestone in the detriment of Judeo-Christian relations and also the devastation of the two religions that had the temple as significant emblem. The fact would perhaps have had greater impact upon Jewish Christianity than on Judaism. Klawans (2012:181-207) cites for example the Tosefta and Talmud (*Menahot* (meal offerings) 13.22; *Yoma* (order of festivals) 1.1, 38c; *b. Yoma* (order of festivals) 9a-b; Guggenheimer: 2014; Danby 1919) against Josephus' *Wars of the Jews* 3.6 and 5.2 (O'Bannon 2016:1299, 1403), in which it appears that there is a construct of theodicy, lament and hopeful atonement. The 'devastation' brought about by the destruction of the temple could perhaps not be as devastating in light of the following reasons deductive from the Rabbinic sources and Josephus:

- This has become a formative process in the consolidation of Judaism and its orthodoxy, due to the fact that there was already a similar event in 586 BC *Menahot* (meal offerings) 13.22 (Guggenheimer 2014, Danby 1919).
- The event had been predicted by *Lamentations Rabbah* 1.5 (32b-33a).
- These events were believed to have been the consequence of divine interposition on the transgressions of the Jews (*Wars* 3.6, 401; 5.2; O'Bannon 2016:1299, 1403).

With the above, Klawans (2012) facilitates a new standpoint with regards to how the schism came about: By revisiting the hostilities between the Jews and the Romans it becomes clear that the schism was brought about by a new Judaism, more than a new Christianity. In consideration of Josephus' observations concerning the perception of the Jews with regards to the woes of the Roman retaliation and oppression, the researcher has reached the following conclusions (cf. *Wars* 3.6):

- In light of the Babylonian siege and regrouping of the Jews, the dismal picture of a dissented Judaism after AD 70 becomes in many ways a misappropriation

of the situation that was prevalent, though in agreement with the hypothesis, this could have signalled the inception of the demise of Jewish Christianity.

- For Judaism this was apparently a negative era, but not one so unfamiliar to their religious history.

After this analysis of the revisionism of Klawans regarding the impact of the destruction of the temple in AD 70, the researcher concludes that there was a formative impetus derived from the destruction of the temple, that saw the self-definition of Judaism and Christianity as they emerged distinct from this ordeal. This further solidifies the hypothesis, since the schism is, according to the hypothesis, a catalytic agent to the Hellenistic enculturation that Christianity would undergo. The preceding was accomplished by how the destruction of the temple conceived a self-distinguishing trend in Judaism and correspondingly Christianity had to also establish its own identity. This further entails the significance of a discussion on the issue of self-definition.

#### **4.3.7.3 The self-defining solution**

Against the background of the revisionist approaches on the schism by Yoder (2003) and Boyarin (2010), Klawans' revision of the destruction of the temple in AD 70, as well as the alternative viewpoint with regards to the *Birkat haMinim* by Van der Horst (1998), it is clear that the schism is not a straightforward separation between Christianity and Judaism. The schism should rather be viewed as an element of self-defining continuity, resulting in the new form of Christianity that emerged later on.

Lieu, a scholar on self-definition, concludes the matter in a manner cognizant of the deviant dynamics caused by the intricacy of the link that was present between Christianity and Judaism (Lieu 2012:228). She argues for an emergence of a reformed understanding to the matter, claiming that the traditional view had been replaced by a more 'eirenic model of diverging paths' (Lieu 2012:228). She also argues against the designation of a date of the 'provocation' based upon the ambiguity of the target of the *Birkat haMinim* and its limited scope outside the land of Israel. Last, deriving from the absence of a normative Judaism at this point of time, she concludes:

Now that Rabbinic Judaism is no longer taken as the controlling norm for any reconstruction of Jewish thought throughout our period (first and second century) we can also recognize that Christian theology's attempts to address the Hellenistic world continued to owe much to the earlier and

perhaps continuing efforts made by Jews to speak of their God in the same context (Lieu 2012:228).

These concluding words of Lieu do not entail a detached relation, but one detached and yet affiliated. The strong rhetoric used by Christian polemics against Judaism and Hellenism, for example, shows the rift between text and reality. The rigorous efforts by polemics to distance Christianity from the otherness in the form of both Jews and Hellenists found its equal in the imposition of the Jewish worldview by the rabbis. Inevitably 'Jews and Christians share a common matrix even, or especially, when they refuse to acknowledge this' (Lieu 2012:228).

These assertions of Lieu imply two possibilities. First, as delimitation to this study, a schism in terms of proportions would imply a negation of the hypothesis, because the schism would be more significant than Hellenism, as proposed; on the other hand, a furtherance of the hypothesis that Hellenism, and not imperial politics, is more significant, is made possible, since the inevitable relationship between Judaism and Christianity meant that henceforth by any attempt at self-definition, whilst trying to delineate itself, Christianity would seemingly undo its very essentials (Jewish elements), thereby leaving a socio-ethnic gap to be filled by Hellenism. In the second century Hellenism loomed significantly as another catalyst to ecumenical orthodoxy, having paved the way for the socio-ethnic upheaval induced by the schism. This saw the positioning of the schism as a catalyst to ecumenical orthodoxy as argued by the hypothesis.

#### **4.3.8 The schism positioned in ecumenical orthodoxy**

How did the schism between the Jews and Christians contribute to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy? Having analysed the preceding reviews of scholars on the Jewish-Christian schism, this section contains the conclusion of the researcher. The rising enmities were apparent with the growing gentile texture of the new faith and its disregard for the Torah. Notable though is the fact that the *Birkat haMinim* marked another self-definition in the face of the Roman threat to extinction. Given the obstinacy of Judaism which was keen to maintain its status as an ancient and acceptable *religio licita* (legitimate religion), it would be politically expedient for the Christians to take the apologetic road to Hellenistic ideology and the politics of Rome.



Maybe one can conclude this to have been a metaphorical exchange of places as Judaism would soon see itself legislated against by the emperor, in an act of entrenching Christianity as the more stable and acceptable religion. Unlike Judaism, Christianity was going to have imperial publicity and imperially backed orthodoxy in the form of conciliar ecumenism transcending geographical, economic and social boundaries formally unknown to its predecessor. There are also certain implications derived from the schism that point to the trajectory that Christianity would take.

#### **4.3.8.1 Implications of the schism**

Complementary to the analysis of the schism made by the researcher above, there is a certain trajectory that was consequential of the schism. Nickelsburg (2003:195) cites certain results from the schism which the research embraces:

- In a seemingly retaliatory mood gentile Christianity became more exclusive of Jews, excommunicating those who insisted on keeping the Torah.
- A thriving Christianity without the Torah is attributable to the gradual rise of Pauline Christianity which seemingly peaks later on with radicals such as Marcion. Despite the excommunication of Marcion, however, 'the dismissal of the authority of Mosaic Torah would become a constitutive part of orthodoxy' (Nickelsburg 2003:196).
- 'A denigrating comparison of Judaism and Christianity' (Nickelsburg 2003:196) has riddled Christianity's historiography since the stage was set for a redefining of Christianity as it left Judaism.

These insights of Nickelsburg have led to the deduction that the first century was the age of alienation from Judaism as attested by literature that propelled hostilities, given the political environment that had Jews as the public enemy and curses in their liturgy.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

The concept of ecumenical orthodoxy has been introduced as an anachronistic idea, explaining Christianity as characterized by imperial councils after AD 325. As to the cause of this form of Christianity, as cited from Roldanus (2006), it was a matter of contextual enculturation, and by Lieu (2012), self-definition. Hence there was a

continuous trajectory that was responsible for the form of Christianity that emerged at every turn of the century, and these are the factors for this research.

How did the schism between the Jews and Christians contribute to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy? The Jewish-Christian schism, noted amongst scholarship as the eventful parting of ways, was one of the significant formulative events in the history of early Christianity (Lieu 2012; Marcus 2012), especially against the backdrop of the charismatic Judaic background of nascent Christianity (Vermes 2012). The intensification of hostilities between Rome and Jerusalem saw a growth in a sentiment of alienation between Judaism and Christianity that became actively voiced in polemics (Doran 1995). The departure from Jewish Christianity and an anti-Semitic stance of even the radical Marcion would still find way into orthodox Christianity (Nickelsburg 2003). The *Birkat haMinim* did not contribute to the situation either (Marcus 2012). However, Yoder (2003) has since shown that the schism may not have been a decisive 'event', but rather simply a signal of a developing trajectory of alienation. The schism should be reviewed against the backdrop of the complexity of the Jewish-Christian social matrix.

Conclusively the Schism can be seen as the first step of Christianity's quest for redefinition. The proceeding step was that of alignment to Graeco-Roman thought. The influence of philosophy on Christianity became a second and third century phenomenon.

## CHAPTER 5

### HELLENISATION OF CHRISTIANITY: CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY EMERGES

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the complexity of the Christian-Jewish matrix, the schism had an alienating impact upon each of the two institutions. Added to this, the anti-Semitic sentiment that was consequent of the polemics would introduce the orthodoxy. A revitalized Judaism after the uprisings, and its repudiation of anti-Jewish heresy, implied the weakening of Jewish Christianity. These factors and others as explored in the previous chapter entailed a trajectory towards philosophic enculturation for Christianity.

This chapter explores the subject of Hellenism and acculturation of Christianity. After the schism Christianity entered a phase of acculturation to Hellenistic philosophy, as mentioned in the hypothesis. Whereas the first catalyst – the Jewish-Christian schism – is discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter is a continuum of the hypothesis by reviewing the next mentioned catalyst, namely Hellenism.

This chapter discusses the views of Drodge, who refers to the evolutionary nature of the Christian, Jewish, Roman, and Greek communities (cf. Drodge 2012:230), and to the second century as a crucial moment in the formation of Christian thought. The views of Justin Martyr (*Dial Trypho* 2.7; Schaff 1885a:305, 310), who was dubbed the first Christian philosopher, are also discussed, especially for his attempt to establish Christianity as descending from antiquity. This is in line with an establishment of how much Christianity was Hellenised.

#### 5.2 HELLENISM AS PHILOSOPHY: JUSTIN THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER

Renowned for his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin also chronicled apologies such as the *Address to Antoninus Pius First Apology* 67 (Schaff 1885a:290; cf. Drodge 2012:231). He endeavoured to establish Christianity as an ancient tradition that demanded attention in Roman thought. In a form of Platonism where he argued for the supremacy of Christianity as the ultimate truth, Justin inferred the antique nature of the writings of

Moses *First Apology* 59 (Schaff 1885a:284; Drodge 2012:231). These actions show a continuity of what Lieu (2012) calls self-definition, a consequence of the schism where Christianity was creating a new identity.

Drodge (2012:231) establishes that Justin emphasized the ancient roots that Christianity had in Judaism, and that many poets and philosophers of the Greek world wrote about wisdom. The idea of Greek sages deriving their wisdom from quests they had made to the East resonated with Justin's claims. An example is Herodotus who mentioned that in an encounter, Hecataeus of Miletus' establishment of only sixteen lines of his genealogy could not compare with how an Egyptian priest of Thebes went back 345 generations (Drodge 2012:231).

Justin's endeavour came as one amongst many attempts by gentile authors to create Greek histories of their cultures in order to consider themselves as part of antiquity; others are Berossus' *Babylonian history*, Manetho's *Egyptian History* (Waddell 1964), Philo of Byblos' *Phoenician history* and the *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus (cf. Drodge 2012:232). All these were attempts to account for each civilization's contribution to the greater civilization, attributing to their indigenous gods/God and culture the heritage from which Greek culture emanated.

The following two excerpts taken from the *Dialogue with Trypho* affirm that Justin idealized Greek philosophy as monolithic, and Christian prophecy as the epitome of philosophic knowledge:

What philosophy really is and why it was sent down to humans have escaped the observation of most. Otherwise there would not be Platonists, Stoics, Peripatetics, Theoreticians and Pythagoreans, for philosophy is one science, *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.1-2. There existed long before this time certain men, more ancient than all those who are considered philosophers [by the Greeks]...who spoke by the divine spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and are now taking place. They are called prophets...Their writings are still extant...*having* matters which the philosophers ought to know (*Dial Trypho* 7.1-2; Schaff 1885a:311).

According to these excerpts, Christianity was seeking to identify with the rest of the philosophies at the time. Cynical though is Justin's reference to the prophets as greater philosophers which would imply credibility to Judaism as the forerunner of Christianity.

According to Drodge (2012:234), Justin and Tertullian argued for Christianity to have a place in antiquity as a source for Greek poets and philosophers. Justin even went further and utilized the oracles of Hystaspes and the Sibyl to substantiate his claims. As parallels Justin constructed heathen analogies to Christian doctrine which was a reconciliation of Platonism with biblical understanding. He tried to establish evidences of what he would call a faulty interpretation of the Scriptures by Plato the philosopher, such as the placing of a deity crosswise. Referring to the latter, Justin suggested that it is a misappropriation of Numbers 21:6-9 by Plato who could not fully figure out Christological imagery (Drodge 2012:233).

The analysis of Drodge emphasizes how Justin attempted to authenticate Christianity as a religion with its roots in antiquity. It can be argued that his quest was not for reconciliation, but rather to prove the superiority of Christianity over the rest of philosophy, as it accomplished the great object of leading people to God, *Dialogue with Trypho* 8.1 (Schaff 1885a:312). In agreement with Drodge's views on Justin Martyr, it is clear that when Christianity separated from Judaism, it had to create its distinct territory. As highlighted by previous scholars like Doran (1995:62), this would entail a transformation of worldview, hence in this case Justin Martyr represented a transformational phase in Christianity where it began to incorporate philosophy. This created the space for Christianity to embrace philosophical elements; later Christianity needed councils to affirm its authority and become ecumenical orthodoxy.

Justinian's understanding of the origin of philosophy correlated with the *Protrepticus* written by the philosopher, Posidonius of Apamea (Drodge 2012:235). The argument of Posidonius was that philosophy needed to return to its original roots, in the person of Aristotle. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* 2.1 (Schaff 1885a:306), Justin lamented what he saw as a divergence from Plato, echoing sentiments of Numenius. Consequently, the idea of an original unity of philosophy was seen through an endeavour to get back to a primitive theology or ancient theology (Drodge 2012:236). As apparent in the

writings of Justin, and observed by Drodge (2012), Justin was engaging gentile philosophy. As mentioned earlier on he appears to have had an inclination towards Platonism, yet there were also elements of Stoicism in his works.

### **5.2.1 Justin the Stoic**

Seemingly the influence of philosophy on Christianity took on many facets. Denzey (2010:176) argues that Christianity held a complex relation with Stoicism, despite its rejection of it, embracing it 'in a complicated pattern of rebuttals, refutations and ultimately assimilation of Stoic ideals'. Seneca (4 BC - AD 65) found a continuum in Christian philosophical thought. Tertullian called him 'our Seneca', showing cordiality with his ideas, specifically with the impact of his idea of determinism and fate upon Christianity (Denzey 2010:177). During the philosophical quest of Justin, as mentioned in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, apart from the peripatetics and Pythagoreans, Justin interacted with Stoics as well (*Dial Trypho* 1.5; *2 Apol* 8.3; Schaff 1885a:304, 305, 299-300). In systematic fashion Justin, in his second *Apology*, castigated their view on free will, yet adopted Seneca's viewpoint (*2 Apol* 7; cf. Denzey 2010:177; Schaff 1885a:299). Justin counterbalanced his acknowledgement of Stoic abstemiousness with what he deemed as their ambiguity concerning the cause of human actions, arguing against this, since it pictured God 'emerging both in part and in whole in every wickedness' (*2 Apol* 7; Schaff 1885a:299). He also acknowledged them as having sound moral teaching (*2 Apol* 8.3; Schaff 1885a:299-300).

In partial agreement with Denzey (2010), the researcher perceives the new self-defining intelligence of Christianity where it established its views amongst other philosophical viewpoints. In Justin's evaluation of Stoicism, the stage was set for Christianity to embrace 'some' elements of Stoicism whilst discarding the rest. The result would be a religion engulfing diverse philosophical elements – a syncretistic melting pot. The researcher concurs with Lieu (2012) that there are self-defining implications. Justin is therefore a representative of a continual trend in Christianity which, after alienating itself from Judaic worldviews and still retaining elements thereof, started to selectively embrace other elements such as, in this case, Stoicism.

### 5.2.2 Cumulative deductions: Self-differentiating enculturation

It can be argued that the interaction of Justin as a proleptic of Christian philosophical thinking, would clarify Christianity's endeavours for self-definition. Justin and Christianity were to establish a reputable position as an ideology, and this was to be done by deriving certain elements of philosophy, whilst repudiating some, to maintain defining borders. However, as a positive impetus to an emerging movement, it is notable that a review of Christianity's philosophy of martyrdom shows parallels to how the philosophers viewed a tranquil death. This implies that, since Christianity had diverted from Judaism which, according to Vermes (2012:62), was one of the chief causes to its growth, there was need for alternative growth sources, and in this case, a resilient morale against persecution would be dually credited to both philosophy and Christian roots.

Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* (51.9; 1.2; *Annaei Senecae Epistularum Moraliū Ad Lucilium Liber Primus* s.a.) resonates with a certain triumphalism in death that accords with Cyprian's *Lapsi* 8 (Schaff 1885e:511) or the story of Perpetua (20.7; 21.8-10; Farina 2009:176; Musurillo 1972). Apparently in these accounts martyrdom is portrayed as a heroic invincibility inside someone that cannot be conquered by death they did not fear. Alternatively, Christians had many models for sacrificial death in the person of Jesus and many others. Yet it seems that as much as they contrasted martyrs to philosophers, the same trend resurged where there is a clamour for philosophical recognition of self-defining Christianity. The association of Christianity with philosophy drew responses from pagan thinkers.

### 5.3 PAGAN RETALIATION

The identification of Christianity with pagan philosophy courted the ire of pagan critics, a fact insinuating the apparent self-defining argument of Christianity being a philosophy. Origen's *Against Celsus* (*Contra Celsum*) implied that Justin's views were significant in the philosophical world, as they attracted pagan criticism like that of Celsus. Celsus who, despite having the same ideas as Justin regarding the origin of philosophy (*Cont Cels* 2.4; Schaff 1885d:866), attacked Christianity because it had diverted from the *patrioi nomoi* (the ancestral traditions) (cf. Drodge 2012:238). Another significant fact is that *Against Celsus*, because it was the work of Origen, a Church Father – which implies the bias that the author was taking – would counter the

pagans, yet there is objectivity in Celsus' words. Celsus referred to ancient tradition in general – that is Egyptian and Greek culture – in support of the hypothesis that Christianity had left Jewish tradition with the schism. The implications would be inclined towards an autonomous Christian tradition claiming a place in antiquity, yet it had originated from ancient Jewish traditions, *Against Celsus* 4.11, 41-2, 2.1, and 3.5 (Schaff 1885d:873, 903, 904, 737, 807, 866).

### **5.3.1 Deduced insights**

The observations made by Drodge (2012:238) with regards to Celsus' attack on Justin complement the hypothesis of this study. Despite Celsus' referral to *patrioi nomoi* as a pagan descent from ancient Greek and Egyptian myth, the fact that Christianity had descended and diverted from its foundational Judaic traditions (cf. Nickelsburg 2003) gives some objectivity to Celsus' observations. It is this endeavour that helped Christianity to remodel itself as a philosophy, rather than a religion with praxis roots – it would therefore become an intellectual religion rather than a practical one. Drodge (2012:243) asserts that Justin, in an effort to rewrite the history of philosophy in paganism and Judaism, was 'laying the groundwork for the very categories of "Christianity"'. This resonates with the observations about the schism, that there was a discursive action in the delineation of borders between these institutions. However, the borderlines were not only between Christianity and Judaism, but incorporated the Greeks as well. Boyarin (2001:456) argues that the strength of the rhetoric only implies the intended ideal by the proponents, in this case Justin and Celsus, whilst the reality presented a different scenario. Therefore the research asserts that because Christianity had a Judeo background, self-definition would primarily mean alienation. Though Hellenised Christianity did not necessarily possess a philosophic history, in the process of self-definition from Greek elements, Christianity modelled itself as philosophy, hence being more embrasive of Greco-Roman ideals. Ultimately this acculturated the emergence of an intra-self-definition in the name of orthodoxy. Chronologically Christianity entered into a second sophistic phase.

### **5.3.2 The second sophistic phase**

The redefinition of Christianity as a philosophy also saw this religion positioning itself strategically. The views of Nasrallah who agrees with the scholars discussed above, are now discussed. Nasrallah (2010:73) also postulates that Justin was amongst other



Christian authors who found themselves in the midst of a second sophistic phase with a second-century philosophical mind frame, as she notes the imitations of the dialogue to the Platonic dialogues. Concerning the anti-Judaism assertions, she indicates that Christianity was aligning itself all the more with Roman thought than with its Jewish roots. The way in which Christianity allegorized the Jewish Scriptures, likened it more to the mythologies of the Greeks, therefore giving Christianity a whole new identity (Nasrallah 2010:73).

#### **5.4 EXCLUSIVE HOMOGENEITY: HELLENISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO ORTHODOXY**

According to Drodge and Nasrallah, there was an evolving element in Christianity which changed its form in the second century. In relation to the build-up towards a Christianity of councils and imperial involvement, one needs to pay particular attention to the events at that stage, as they appear to have been very formative, since they influenced the ideology of Christianity itself. Hence in this section, Hellenism is reviewed for the homogenous and exclusive characteristics of its influence on Christianity.

The influence of Platonism which was observed in the writings and arguments of Christian apologists like Justin, shaped the idea of homogeneity. The issue of homogeneity was more or less the principle from which a new form of orthodoxy emerged at that stage. Despite an inherent argument for the homogenous and exclusive nature of Judaism from which Christianity stemmed, Christianity also uniquely dichotomized itself along the divisions of orthodoxy and heresy. An inference to Hellenistic philosophy and syncretised ideas in the formation of an ideology deemed authentic, would primarily compose of what orthodoxy was. The views of Rives and Minns are here discussed, parallel with the primary sources, Irenaeus and Ignatius, with regards to homogeneity and the issue of orthodoxy.

Rives (2005:17) asserts that exclusiveness had been an element in Christian polemics since the time of the Pauline writings. Agreeably the research has already established that Christianity distinguished itself in the self-defining alienation that was consequent of the schism (see section 4.2.3). Added to this, since Christianity had Judaic roots, it had to be exclusive, yet its exclusiveness became more entrenched. In a polytheistic

environment such as that of Rome, a monotheism that would even refuse a hierarchy of deities, would be notable. Though Judaism was reputable for this, yet Christianity's adoption of a dualistic mindset made it all the more dichotomous in its approach (Rives 2005:17). The implication was not only avoidance of paganism, but hostility towards it. Rives' observations entail the significance of this exclusiveness and ideology as formative to the Christianity that received imperial support and established orthodoxy through councils in the third and fourth century. It appears as if homogeneity would be central to the formation of orthodoxy. The subject of homogeneity is explored at greater length below.

#### **5.4.1 On homogeneity**

Irenaeus, the father of heresiology, alluded to the imagery of the sun as he advocated for uniformity of belief and practice in Christianity, only one form of Christianity could be Christianity (*Adv Haer* 1.10.2; Schaff 1885a:542). Rives (2005:23-24) asserts that this idea established a dichotomy between the orthodox beliefs of the church and the innumerable heresies. For him this exclusiveness significantly established an orthodoxy, a fact that will be disputed by the researcher, because philosophised Christianity was still bound to its apostolic origins. As has already been discussed, the schism was a gradual act of alienation and not abrupt (see section 4.2.7), and it signified the trend that was conceived by multiple factors. The excerpts of Justin showed that not all of Judaism was discarded, but that there was a selective reformulation of Judaic elements in Christianity. Added to this, the review that follows on the exclusive and cultic nature of second-temple Judaism, argues that the best explanation for the influence of homogeneity on orthodoxy is the self-defining continuum.

Rives (2005:24) notes how scholarship urged a reconstruct of historical thought where, against the view of the one orthodox church against heretics, scholars instead hinted on different Christian groups with diverse practices. They established the orthodox-heretical dichotomies to be constructions of those leaders who advocated for a strict homogeneity, inclined more towards uniformity (Rives 2005:24). These scholars argued that a view of orthodoxy against heresy did not have an early Christian origin, but that it evolved with later scholarship (Thompson 2015:213-215). This appears to be a deduction from Bauer's theory, something that the researcher disagrees with,

given the Judaeo origins of Christianity, which had an exclusive homogeneity as seen in the second-temple orthodoxy (see below).

Despite the affinity of the idea of Christian homogeneity to Platonism's polemic exclusivity, the form of Christianity's homogeneity is seen to be slightly alienated from the rest of the Graeco-Roman thought that entertained much multiplicity and diversity. However, certain scholars have observed that Christian polemicists derived a form and structure from Platonic writings in their attacks. An example is the establishment of the antiquity of ideas termed 'orthodox' in contrast to the emphatic imminence of heresies. Dogma and authoritative elements are then derived from a second-century platonic polemic.

There are other scholars arguing differently as to the origin of Christian homogeneity, referring to as second-temple Judaism. Some cite its absolute nature traceable throughout canonical writings such as the Pauline corpus. The sectarianism found in second-temple Judaism may make it appear as 'a paradoxical assertion since the divisiveness of Jewish tradition hardly seems to suggest a commitment to homogeneity' (Rives 2005:26). Rives argues that sectarianism entails that each sect claimed orthodoxy, hence the greater possibility that this exclusiveness and homogeneity were fabricated by Christianity's Jewish descent. This therefore implies that the respective sects as claimants of orthodoxy will require conformity to their code thereby implying a case for homogeneity. The researcher agrees with this view, since Christianity still remained a protégé of Judaism and elements of its predecessor were still visible even after the schism.

Jewish sects are depicted by Josephus as Greek philosophical schools, claiming to be the embodiment of the true Jewish heritage (*Ant Jud*; O'Bannon 2016:45). The Qumran scrolls, for example, show a sharp critique of opponents by the Essene sect. Rives (2005:27), however, establishes that underneath the antagonistic relation to different beliefs exercised in these institutions were undertones of a desire for homogeneity. This is understood as evidence for self-definition which was at play. Therefore, concerning exclusiveness, the researcher concludes that this was an *en route* towards a new established homogeneity. Ignatius, for example, in affirmation of the preceding fact, engaged in a form of equilibrium between his polemics and strong

calls for unity. This subject of homogeneity found place with prominent Christian authors such as Irenaeus whose views are explored below.

#### **5.4.2 Irenaeus: Structures of truth and the common faith**

The recently explored idea of homogeneity and exclusiveness is based on Irenaeus' writings. In his *Against Heresies* Irenaeus asserted his understanding of an unanimous faith, a Catholic Church. This 'church' though would not stifle diversity due to its geographically expansive nature, except when there would be divergent ideologies – for these (divergent ideologies) would not only threaten the unity and harmony of the church, but, according to Minns (2012:262), also were an attack on the authority derived in succession from the preceding apostolic leadership. This deduction by Minns shows the emerging trajectory in which the church was set upon as, at that stage, it desired an enforced unity, ultimately universal/ecumenical orthodoxy, and the influence and use of philosophical arguments by the scholars of the time. Here Irenaeus become resonant with the hypothesis that Hellenism exerted an extensive influence in the process.

In *Against Heresies* 1.10.2 (Schaff 1885a:542) Irenaeus urged that, despite the universal nature of the church and its geographical separation, there should have been emphatic interventionist interaction by the leadership with all the churches, even those that were far from the Roman nucleus. The implications of this ideology, perhaps unknown to him, were very formative of the elements composite to capacitate ecumenical orthodoxy. One of them would be a strong episcopacy as is reviewed later in the research.

For Irenaeus (*Adv Haer* 1.10.2; Schaff 1885a:542) the church was 'as though living in a single dwelling...possessing one soul', which would imply the ineffaceability of geographical differences to curtail the unanimous nature of praxis. The church had one mouth, which was its unity of voice. Despite the multi-lingual nature of the different locations in which the church found itself, 'the power of tradition was one and the same' (*Adv Haer* 1.10.2; Schaff 1885a:542).

In view of the above, the work of Irenaeus is significant in the enculturation and contextualization process, especially in the phase of how the church would be the face of an orthodox self-definition. This is evident in how he sought a universally uniform

church, one that was exclusively homogenous, despite the church's expansive nature as it transcended geographical and cultural terrains. The researcher finds this to be a new element in a religion that used to embrace diversity as seen in Acts 15 – how there was consideration of gentile converts not to be bound to certain customs. According to Minns (2012:263), Irenaeus became 'the first exponent of catholic orthodoxy' (with the term 'catholic' meaning 'universally enforced'). The work of Irenaeus appears to have been more of a reaction to the emerging schismatic heresies such as the Gnostics. Therefore, his ideology concerning homogeneity has not been totally inherent to Christianity.

Significant to this hypothesis is also Irenaeus' relaxed views concerning the Roman Empire, in the midst of the hostile connection between the church and state of persecutor and persecuted. Whilst Irenaeus was advancing an exclusive homogenous dichotomy between Christianity and certain elements of Judaism, he embraced cordiality with the state. This was despite the influence of Polycarp (who was renowned for martyrdom) on him, also the Vienne and Lyons persecutions (cf. Minns 2010:2,3). In *Against Heresies* 4.30.1.3 (Schaff 1885a:841-843) he praised the *Pax Romana* (Roman peace) and attributing Christian freedom to it. The writings of Irenaeus point to the incline the church was taking in the self-defining process.

These observations by Minns (2010) and Rives (2005) as scholars on Irenaeus, also concern later Christian thought. Since, according to Irenaeus, the enemies of Christianity were inside the church, this would go a long way in endearing the ecclesiastical power structure then emerging to the secular politics of Rome, an event confirmed by the appearance of Constantine. This would be coupled with a firmer stance against divergent views, therefore consolidating the power of the newly entrenched Christian authority. Despite the significance that Irenaeus attached to the bishops as they maintained the flow of apostolic tradition (Minns 2012:269), and that they received with episcopal succession 'the certain charism of truth' (*Adv Haer* 4.26.2; Schaff 1885a:831), Minns argues that the eminence of an episcopacy did not 'loom large' in Irenaeus' works. This is more prominent in the works of Cyprian of Carthage and Ignatius of Antioch (cf. Brent 2007). Irenaeus' explicit contribution to ecumenical orthodoxy appears rather to have been the composition of truth.

### **5.4.3 Body of truth**

A closer look at Irenaeus' contribution requires an investigation into his literary works. Minns (2010:10-11) asserts that rhetorical training had intense implications not only on Irenaeus' cognitive domain, but also on his literary work. That is seen in his defence of the homogeneity he championed, that sometimes he charged the heretics not with evidence, but with rhetorical attacks on the personage of the group. This becomes significant since it furthers the thought that, as a factor of self-definition, the homogeneity or orthodoxy desired by Irenaeus was not beyond ancient tenets of Christianity alone, but against the background of the schism, there was also a pursuit of identity within Christianity itself. What can be understood as superimposition, Irenaeus argued for a method of interpretation that would be integrated with all 'truth' (*Adv Haer* 1.9.4; Schaff 1885a:541). Those who would deviate from this body of truth (such as the Gnostics), whilst claiming authentic tradition, would be composed of heretics. On the other hand Minns (2010:16) argues for a moderately self-defining Irenaeus who would acknowledge the belonging of the 'others' to Christianity. Diversity of opinion had not always led to schism, despite its presence in the history of Christianity. Minns deems it prejudiced to align orthodoxy with the majority opinion, because only in the second century does one see a self-defining orthodoxy that identified 'the great church' as the majority (Minns 2010:16).

With reference to that argument, the researcher understands the emergence of orthodoxy as a continuation of the self-defining process that created the framework capable of nurturing and entrenching Christianity with a philosophical and political mould, concluding that the movement for homogeneity and the influence of early scholars such as Irenaeus added up to the factors constituting ecumenical orthodoxy.

## **5.5 FORMATION OF AN ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY**

In this section the emergence of the principle of an ecumenical orthodoxy is explored against the growing influence of philosophy discussed above. The striving for homogeneity is visible throughout early Christianity. Acts 15 reports about a general council meeting where the church formulated a standard policy concerning a new dynamic of gentile Christians in relation to the mosaic laws and traditions (cf. Vermes 2012). Though attention is given to geographical conditions of the several groups of Christians, yet the drive to uniform policy is apparent (Rives 2005:28): 'Moreover, the

mechanisms adopted to achieve this common policy (meetings, exchanges of letters, the formal issuing of policy statements) were those that Christian leaders would continue to employ in their pursuit of homogeneity for centuries to come’.

The methodology through which unity would be gained became systematized. Though, unlike the First Jerusalem Council that addressed a new dynamic and that had not much to do with a review of doctrine, the later councils would be premised upon the new phenomenon that would at times restructure the already established ideologies. Therefore, it can be stated that unity or orthodoxy established through councils was authenticated primarily by the council’s authority, whether in its composition or endorsed authority as a majority. This authority derived its policy or dogma from sources, tradition, and records. The Jerusalem Council was well entrenched in the Hebrew Scriptures and the recent experiences of the apostle Peter on how to react to the new dynamic (Acts 15).

The influence of a Hellenised Christianity was apparent in councils and synods from the beginning of the second century onwards. Apparently this became the new format of establishing unity within the movement. The adoption of Platonism in respect to dualism only made the councils more exacting. This formulation of orthodoxy dominated from the third century onwards, as is evident from the Church Fathers, Cyprian and Ignatius.

The absolutistic approach derived from Platonism is evident in both the orthodoxy and those termed heretical. As has been reviewed before, Marcion, known for his antithesis, showed an antagonistic approach towards the Judaizing errors. Whereas Marcion was a ‘great heretic’, as hinted by Tertullian in his *Five Books against Marcion* (Book 1; Schaff 1885c:436), yet this observation with regards to his absolutistic/exclusivist tone hinted that this was a prevalent practice in Christianity. Alternatively, in another controversially heretic text, the *Nag Hammadi* codex (*Second Treatise of the Great Seth*), are recorded first person attacks upon opponents, likening them to the lower order of creatures (*NHC* 7.2.59, 22-29; Robinson 1996:367). These rhetorical attacks found on either side of the Christian movement are understood to show the entrenchment of the emerging exclusivity of Christianity, which was part of

the self-definition process. This would be elementary to the then Christianity and hence paved the way for an ecumenical orthodoxy.

### **5.5.1 Homogeneity and the cultic nature of the emerging orthodoxy**

The argument of Rives (2005) that the success of Christianity as a movement lied also within its cohesive nature, made the discussion about exclusivity and homogeneity more necessary. Given that their delineations from paganism needed to be distinct, the Platonic polemic that divided Christianity from paganism became inevitable. Christianity had to be precise in regard to its boundaries with paganism. It was therefore necessary for a Christian ideology to have a strong drive for homogeneity. However, these efforts for uniformity were costly, for it resulted in several groups that evolved because an insistence of uniformity implied that differences became more marked (cf. Rives 2005). It gave rise to many Gnostic groups that emerged in Christianity. This acknowledgement of the diversities amongst Christian groups, consequent of the drive for homogeneity, is part of the self-defining process that Christianity underwent. According to Rives (2005), it formed part of the Platonic polemic and entailed that Hellenism's influence was such that it shaped the framework for a dichotomised Christianity, as it then would be divided between heretics and orthodoxy. The urge for homogenous uniformity as enforced by the clergy through the diverse institutions of the church implied the inevitability of ecumenical orthodoxy.

Hellenism and the self-defining circumstances were not characteristic to Christianity alone, but also to Judaism, especially second-temple Judaism, which necessitates an analytic comparison in this study. This is also necessary because of the emerging orthodoxy.

### **5.5.2 Cultic emergence: Second-temple orthodoxy versus ecumenical orthodoxy**

The above discussion concerning the similarities between the catalysts that pervaded the Jewish second-temple orthodoxy and ecumenical orthodoxy, merits a review of Jewish second-temple sectarianism as paralleled in the groups that evolved in Christian thought. Heretical groups emerged as a reaction to the Hellenisation of Christianity and an alienation from Judaism. The views of Wilson (1970; 1990) who formulated models with respect to sectarian behaviour are used in this discussion.



Second-temple Judaism is of significance here, as it helped to better comprehend the self-defining fabric of an emerging orthodoxy in the second and third centuries AD. This implies that Christianity should be reviewed as a cult, as a consequence of the socio-ethnic and cultural dynamics of the schism and Hellenism. Alternatively the structures shaping ecumenical orthodoxy as a factor of Hellenised Christianity, emerged from the cultic process (cf. Meissner 2000:66). Meissner observes that biblical and archaeological scholars review Christianity as a synthesized religious form of Judaic-Hellenistic origins. He emphasizes the evolving and yet cultic nature of early Christianity, reconciling early Christianity with its Jewish background (implying the schism to not have been a significant redefining event), significantly analysing Jewish second-temple sectarianism. He argues that the religious and political ideologies of the different religious groups '*could* be regarded as expressing variant responses to the crisis caused by subjection to foreign imperial domination and exploitation' (Meissner 2000:67).

According to Meissner (2000:67), the formation of these groups came against a backdrop of Jewish ideology, Hellenistic acculturation, and antagonism towards the prevalent socio-political environment that was resultant of Roman domination. Against the backdrop of harshness of the Herodians in comparison to the Ptolemaic rule and the other preceding dynasties, Jewish nationalistic sentiment and apocalypticism grew. These deductions by Meissner (2000:67) have implications for a Hellenised Christianity that would later on emerge as Christianity. Of note is the fact that Meissner (2000) attributes the formation of the Jewish sects to an idealistic ideology, which in Christianity's case would parallel the absolutist Platonic polemic, Hellenistic acculturation, and the antagonism to the Roman occupation. These postulations of Meissner (2000) would, however, imply that Hellenism cannot be detachably analysed as a causing factor to the many emerging groups in Christianity and ecumenical orthodoxy which later emerged. Yet this analysis offers an alternative view to the possible implications of Hellenism in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy as a factor of an emerging diversity being countered by the emerging and enforced homogeneity. The researcher disagrees with the fact that Meissner accredits much of his theory to the Jewish background of Christianity, therefore downplaying the impact of the schism as a defining factor in Christianity. However, the arguments of Meissner (2000) remain substantial in their comparative deductions of the impact of Hellenism as a catalyst,

and the emerging (cultic) diversity that shaped the background of ecumenical orthodoxy.

In the same manner Chalcraft (2007:56), in a treatise on the sociology of second-temple sectarianism, attributes the emergence of these sects to crisis. For him the formation of these sects is the result of a reaction to the dynamics of a social threat of Hellenisation, followed by the Roman military occupation and taxation. Each of the four established sects, namely the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, and Essenes, also known as the four philosophies by Josephus, claimed to have the appropriate ideology to the restoration of Davidic glory to Israel. Hence a review of their absolute claims pertaining origins and mandate, as well as temple cult ideology would be insightful in relation to the homogeneity of early Christianity. This can be done in allusion to the insightful parallels that it gives to the analysis of how Christianity was then exposed to the three catalysts (schism, Hellenism, and politics), especially Hellenism, also the development of ideas of homogeneity and diversity as a consequence of the catalysts under review as a build up to the formation of an orthodoxy.

The Sadducees were a priestly and aristocratic sect who boasted of a genealogy descending from Zadok, a priest in the days when Israel has just settled in the Promised Land. They claimed an unchallenged right to priesthood, that would make it an inheritance such as that of the Levite order. They held a more diplomatic stance in relation to the heathen powers dominant in the land. They also urged prudence and removed all occasion for capable revolt or misunderstanding with the established authorities. Amongst them, devotees to Hellenism were found who in turn were given the high priesthood (Meissner 2000:68). Contrary to this, Grabbe (2007:123) refers to Josephus' *Wars of the Jews* 2.8.14 (O'Bannon 2016:1222), where he depicted them as a socially dysfunctional group with no manners. The Sadducees, though not the people's favourite, had significant power (*Ant Jud* 20.9.1; O'Bannon 2016:1076). With the aristocracy of people such as John Hyrcanus, they maintained a connection with the Pharisees to retain a connection with the people, like during the brief reign of Alexandra Salome. Significantly they were out of touch with the general populous, due to some of their religious beliefs other than their closeness to the aliens, such as in *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.1.3.4-23 (O'Bannon 2016:957), where Josephus noted the Sadducees' lack of revolutionism, by not believing in life after death – a belief which

would be key amidst the apparent drudgery of occupation. With regards to the corresponding relationship of self-defining politics and religion, the Sadducees represented a group of political significance and yet void of enculturating philosophy in the form of religion. The mere allusion to the group as sect implies religiosity and belief, yet consequent of the detached nature of Sadducean belief with the prevalent situation, a relationship between politics and religious ideology in formation of orthodoxy is established. A non-acknowledgement of this sect in the formative catalyst to second-temple orthodoxy and nationalism lacks objectivity, yet also to attribute to it much religious significance, is an overstatement. Hence there appears to fulfil a significant formative role in politics irrespective of the acculturating philosophy in the self-defining process.

Meissner (2000:71) postulates a Pharisaic system that, unlike the political Sadducees, emphasized a knowledge and preservation of the law, both the written and the oral Torah, that they claimed to have descended from the time of Ezra. Their ideology revolved around the temple worship experience and practice of the laws and traditions. The Messiah would eschatologically return to the holy mountain, and Israel would then be reinstated, hence inevitability of strict adherence to the law, the condition upon which deliverance would ultimately come, was required. According to Piovanelli (2007:157), sociologically the Sadducees seem to have thrived on their aristocratic links rather than their association with power, for they lacked many sectarian attributes which were prevalent with the Pharisees.

With reference to the Sadducees, the Pharisees represented a group that was significant for its religious popularity, but greatly deficient of substantial political power. This would imply an urging coalition for the sake of any consolidation and entrenchment of realized power. To some degree this parallels the episcopal and imperial link from which ecumenical orthodoxy emerged. Grabbe (2007:121) asserts deductively the Pharisees' thirst for power that once realized during the era of Alexander Janneus' wife (Shelomzion), Alexandra Salome (cf. *Ant Jud* 13.10.5-7; O'Bannon 2016:712-714), though they were renowned for their political activism and intransigence against Rome during the Herodian era (*Ant Jud* 17.2.4-3.1; O'Bannon 2016:911-913), which could have made them resonant with common sentiment. However, Grabbe (2007:122) argues that the involvement of the Pharisees in politics

is more a debate than an established fact as to the degree of their participation. Yet analytically the polarized environment in response to the Roman occupation would imply that a political connotation would be inevitable for any influential group of society. Davies (2007:150) settles the political question arguing, 'undoubtedly the ideological differences that had long characterized Jewish society seem to have formalized into politicized groups'.

Some of the groups emerging from the era were very introversionist, such as the Zealots and the Essenes. The Zealots and Essenes were revolutionary and messianic sects. The collective grouping of these sects did not emanate from a simplification of their diversity, but it was much later called a grouping for the ease of analysis. Zealots, whilst agreeing with Pharisaic theology, were also distinct in their physical approach towards those they termed enemies, more in particular the Roman oppressors. This group was more concerned about the realistic quest for freedom, which could verily take a combat form, hence for them revolution was orthodoxy (Meissner 2000:70). Piovanelli (2007:158) uses Wilson's sociological assessment of sects and classifies the Zealots as utopian and revolutionary in their physical agenda to bring about change. Grabbe (2007:119), citing Josephus (*Ant Jud* 18.1.6; O'Bannon 2016:959) notes the emergence of a fourth philosophy to which was attributed the more violent ideologies of the sicarii and Zealots. These would resemble the extreme reaction to the event that threatened identity. This was a physical attempt at ascertaining self-definition. The association of this philosophy with the idea of 'noble deaths' and 'sacrifice' as a form of martyrdom, would be paralleled in this case by intransigent resistance to orthodoxy that had taken form as a resultant of failure of the enculturation process. The Donatist controversy in AD 314, a prelude to Nicaea, became in this case a worthy comparison.

The Essenes were more ascetic and exclusive, as observed in how they moved from common society, becoming a new community on their own. They refused the worship at the temple, citing its corruption, whilst they condemned the other sects, for example the Pharisees, as 'seekers after smooth things' (Saldarini 1988:283-284,295), emphasizing the community's role in its understanding of the Torah, hinting the ultimate victory of righteousness and the terrible annihilation of the wicked eschatologically (Meissner 2000:73). The Essenes, who were the most well-

documented group, according to Grabbe (2007:116), were notable for their communality as recorded in *Wars of the Jews* 2.8.2 and *Antiquities of the Jews* 18.1.5 (O'Bannon 2016:1217, 958; Saldarini 2000:853-857).

Their exclusivity made them very similar to the Qumran group, whose *Damascus Document* approbated exclusive settlements as endeavours for adherence to the Torah (CD 7.6-8). Their similarity to the Zealots showed the exclusive hermitic introversionist approach adopted later on by other groups in Christianity in response to events threatening the demarcations of their identity. Ecumenical orthodoxy in its universal nature had become a threat engulfing an autonomous definition of identity. In later Christianity these groups are paralleled by certain monastic orders which could have been a response to the established episcopal aristocracy, just as some of these groups attacked the Sadducean aristocrats.

Piovanelli (2007:160) also notes the significance of the Enochians, Hasidim, Qumranites and other millenialist. To summarise, the religio-socio terrain of the second temple cannot be simplified to fit Josephus' triad of the dominant sects, though the sociological dynamics give a helpful insight into the exclusive nature of cultic elements in early Christianity that brought forth ecumenical orthodoxy in Christianity.

#### **5.5.2.1 A sociological approach**

The deductions from the above reviews warrant a sociological approach to the study. The sects discussed above were very divisive and exclusive in their ideologies, which was a cultic process (cf. Meissner 2000), resultant of multiple dynamics such as culture. This found its way into Christian ideology.

The exclusivity of the sects advocated for a homogenous identity, as was clear in the Jewish struggle against Rome. Pharisaic philosophy ultimately became orthodox Judaism. It appears as if all of the sects claimed orthodoxy, and those not part of the sects were denounced, like the Essenes. Primarily they all claimed to have a derived ideology from the Torah in one way or the other. It then became a matter of interpretation as it was the case with Christianity as well, who interpreted the Torah in light of political-social (syncretistic) dynamics.

Wassen and Jorikanta (2007:209) postulate that in sectarianism self-definition is crucial. Citing Stark and Bainbridge (1985; 1987) they define sectarianism as a factor of religious deviance, and also as conditioned in a socio-cultural environment. Within this environment there are dynamics at play that produce a continuous tension.

According to Stark & Bainbridge (1985; 1987), tension is a sub-cultural deviance quantifiable in the form of difference, antagonism, and separation. The preceding manifests as deviant norms, particularistic belief, and attitude, and also happens to be characteristically exclusive in nature. Stark and Bainbridge also note that the standard from which deviation would be measured was a function of the powerful elite rather than the general body (Wassen & Jorikanta 2007:209).

Despite the complexity associated with the study of different periods, the preceding analysis becomes relevant whenever there is an element of religious pluralism. Much of the terminology resonates with the emergence or formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. These dynamics pose a worthy parallel to the events that transpired in Christianity formative of ecumenical orthodoxy. The rise of the Pharisaic sect and the religious influence it had, had the ability to outlive the devastations that would follow after the destruction of the temple and the paganising of Jerusalem by emperor Adrian. These facts imply the tenacity to blend and transform in an adaptable manner to the many dynamics that threatened Judaism as a whole. This also implied the capacity of Christianity to blend and transform in an adaptable manner to Hellenism and political intervention. Here Meissner (2000) has compared Jewish sects with what he calls the cultic process, to which he attributes the emerging urge for homogeneity that was paradoxed by the diversity as embraced by the different groups. In Christianity as it passed through Hellenism towards ecumenical orthodoxy, a worthy comparison had to be established, in this case with Gnosticism.

### **5.5.3 Gnosticism, the cultic sect**

A sociological approach to the study implies a review of the cultic elements within early Christianity, that is the diverse groups that emerged as a result of variant factors, in this case the catalysts, especially Hellenism as expressed in the Platonic drive for homogeneity. In coherence with Meissner (2000) the researcher concludes that Gnosticism was such a possibility. Though with certain reservation, yet a

comprehension of how these deviant groups appeared in a Christianity that was advocating for homogenous practice, the study helps to explain the appearance of an enforced homogeneity, in other words ecumenical orthodoxy. This, against the background of a sociological bias, corresponds to the self-defining process and also emphasizes the impact of Hellenism as a catalyst in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. Meissner (2000:144) asserts that the emergence of a unified Christian movement out of fragmentary sects is a result of what he terms 'the cultic process':

The cultic process...etched out the dimensions of acceptable orthodoxy over against unacceptable heterodoxy. Cultic heterodoxy became the touchstone of the progression towards church status....the cultic process worked out the patterns of differentiation that drove the group formation process in certain directions, forcing certain groups to the periphery and consolidating others in the position of orthodoxy...as the orthodox communities became established, there grew with them a superstructure that preserved and sustained the central position of Christian orthodoxy and cohesion (Meissner 2000:144-145).

According to Meissner (2000), this process by which groups/sects in Christianity delineated their positions, resulted in the formation of orthodoxy or standard practice. The researcher does not fully agree with this, on the grounds that it would entail that orthodoxy is primarily a factor of an advantaged group, as there was no inherent orthodoxy. This possibly can be due to the fact that Meissner did not assign much significance to the Jewish-Christian schism as redefining Christianity in terms of its worldview and certain practices as established earlier (see section 4.3.6.1). This pursuit of uniformity also accompanied by the consolidation of other groups relatively in vantageous positions to others, where they influenced orthodoxy, saw the structural and doctrinal emergence of a universal church (Meissner 2000:145). The above explanation of the cultic process by Meissner is understood to be the same as self-definition. The researcher takes this to have been the consolidation of the Hellenistic ideologies that had been blended into Christianity. The consolidation of the other groups into becoming the influential orthodox majority, however, requires some reservation, since this is based on the premise that all the viewpoints had always been on an equal footing within Christianity, meaning that there was no inherent right idea. The question of where this homogeneity and uniformity that the church would

endeavour to maintain through councils and imperial favour, came from, becomes notable. In this study it is established that Christianity was a progression of Judaism, and therefore the schism meant an ontological transformation for Christianity, that is a change of its actual form, in other words self-redefinition, as it sought out a new identity (see section 4.3.7.3). Also the schism's implied separation of Christianity from Judaism did not imply a total obliteration of Christianity's Jewish background, especially in terms of the worldview, but it saw a blend of these with the new Hellenistic philosophy. Whereas there are certain ideas that had henceforth been alien to both Judaism and Christianity that derived more from Hellenistic philosophy, these would comprise the heresies. This is why an ecumenical orthodoxy's source as a matter of Hellenistic enculturation is explored – the Hellenistic influence being observed in both the orthodox and deviant heretics.

#### **5.5.3.1 Ecumenical orthodoxy, homogeneity and Hellenistic enculturation: Conclusive remarks**

Ecumenical orthodoxy which can be described as unity in uniformity, implies that the heterogeneous elements in Christianity had to become homogenous. A review of the Gnostic sects and how the inevitable reaction against them resulted in orthodoxy, is done below, as suggested by the previous section on the cultic elements within Christianity. Arianism as a heresy and growing philosophy that necessitated the first ecumenical council, is also discussed in order to establish the trend that had become the norm in handling deviant ideas in the church.

The significance of Gnosticism was in its association with Hellenism as its source, though more modern scholars are hinting that it consisted of more Jewish roots than Greek philosophy. Especially with its adoption of Platonic dualism, amongst other things, Gnosticism's allegorization of Scripture and anti-Semitism became nauseating for some early Christian leaders. Christian scholars, in reaction to undo these syncretistic elements, also made reference to Greek philosophy, as noted in the works of Irenaeus, and therefore at that stage it became a matter of philosophy against philosophy. This possibly began to eclipse the view of Scripture, which in this case entailed that the formulation of orthodoxy was not premised upon the authenticity of the source of homogenous practice as much as it would be based rather on the capacities of the tools or structures employed to enforce this homogeneity.



This became more apparent in imperial Christianity, when the religion had caught air with the emperor. In trying to define itself in a syncretistic and polytheistic environment, Christianity ended up a synthesis itself, a confluence of religious philosophy and politics. Below, in the works of different scholars, the issue of Gnosticism is explored as a cultic element of early Christianity.

### **5.5.3.2 Hellenism as Gnosticism**

In this section the Hellenistic component of Gnosticism is discussed, with reference to the works of Reynolds (2010) and Davidson (2004). Gnosticism as an element of neo-Platonism became a chief rival to Christianity. Apart from noting how Plato's dialectic structure of writing found its way in much of the Christian literary work, Reynolds (2010:222) observes the following about Gnosticism:

- It soared in popularity due to its compromise between philosophy and popular religion. This was an appeal to many people who were not educated enough to follow the scholastic debates, yet were not satisfied with the Roman pantheon.
- Its adoptability to other religions and cultures saw its integration in a syncretistic, synthesized fluid form appropriate for many people.

He also notes how Gnosticism influenced certain Christological views and great minds such as Origen. Reynolds adopts the view that insists for the Hellenistic origin of Gnosticism, unlike others who hint rather for the peripheral nature of the Hellenistic influence upon Gnosticism. This argument becomes of prime importance in light of the role ascribed to Hellenism in the formation of Christian thought and structure of the church in this research.

Davidson, however, argues that neo-Platonism only shaped subsequent expressions of Christian theology, but as pertaining its essence and teaching it remained far away from Christianity (Davidson 2004:321). This premise correctly gives room to the autonomy of the formulation of Christian orthodoxy, not ultimately as Hellenistic neo-Platonism, but rather a not so complete synthesis. This, to the mind of the researcher, is an implication of the schismatic self-definition. The Jewish-Christian schism was the first but not complete phase of Christian self-definition. The implication is that as Christianity had a gap that was formerly occupied by the Jewish worldview, Hellenism filled that space. If Gnosticism was inherently neo-Platonic, then it becomes arguable

that heresy was the one inherently Hellenised in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy, though the implication is that Hellenism as a factor was important in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy.

### **5.5.3.3 The contribution of Gnosticism to orthodoxy**

Whilst Davidson (2004) and Reynolds (2010) argue that the significance of Gnosticism to ecumenical orthodoxy stemmed from its origins, other scholars postulate its importance derived from the response it entailed from the structures of Christianity. According to Young (2012:452), 'for orthodoxy to be discovered the counter proposals of heresy were vital'. It is in this sense that Gnosticism became essential in the trajectory of an orthodox Christian self-definition. Doran (1995) and Rives (2005) portray Marcion and Valentinus as exclusive Gnostics that claimed authority in the means of salvation, and by that challenging the rest of Christianity. To some extent this is the view that was held for decades amongst Christian scholars. Brakke (2012) suggests a more complex proposition that argues rather for the intricate connection between Gnosticism and Christian ideology. The researcher understands that to be evidence of how, in an effort to counter Gnostic heresies, Christianity evolved syncretistically into what emerged in late antiquity as imperial Christianity. The views of Brakke (2012) are discussed below on how the reaction to Gnosticism formed an orthodoxy.

#### **5.5.3.3.1 Reactionary formation of orthodoxy**

According to Brakke (2012:245), Irenaeus bracketed all false gnosis into one group, whether it was the allegorizing of Hebrew Scriptures or different perceptions on the Deity, he attributed all of it to Simon Magus. Although some scholars are citing a pre-Christian source, it has become apparent that Christianity was diverse, and that Gnosticism stemmed from these diverse backgrounds.

Many scholars have queried a single categorization for all forms of Gnosticism. Brakke (2012:245) further hints that there is a possibility that 'forms of Christianity that would later be labelled "heresies" predated those that might be identified as "proto-orthodox"'.

According to Brakke (2012), the engulfing of the diversity of early Christianity is not feasible, because of the background of the multi-lateral elements of Jewish self-

differentiation. This, he argues, have resulted in much diversity in early Christianity. This harmonizes with Meissner's deductions regarding the cultic origins of Christianity. Therefore the homogeneity that was fostered and that would also become ecumenical orthodoxy, had to be a factor of either Hellenism or the political intervention by the emperor. The homogeneity that would therefore be sought and enforced by ecumenical orthodoxy was nurtured by Platonic absolutism, and (as is discussed later) was enforced by the political establishment. That there should be a single orthodox code of Christianity can be argued to have been a result of imperial Christianity and does not appear to be in existence at that point, in accordance with Brakke's analysis. Brakke (2012) entails that the orthodoxy that emerged after this process of counter-activity by scholars like Irenaeus, was not inherent to Christianity. This study accords with his analysis. Also, the complexity of the manner in which certain Christian scholars arrived at an ideology, given the dynamics prevalent, substantiated this view, for example Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria derived more from Valentinus, who was a Gnostic, than from Irenaeus (cf. Brakke 2012:245-246).

At that stage orthodoxy came about reactively as a counter to Gnostic heresies. In a bid and effort of self-differentiation, therefore Christianity emerged in this form.

#### **5.5.3.3.2 Systems of self-definition**

Brakke (2012:259) integrates the alienation of Gnostic elements from Judaism (called the 'Gnostic schism' by the researcher) and counter-measures into the acculturating self-defining paradigm. He asserts that the Valentinians and Origen were Gnostic, though harmoniously Christian and also clearly not Judaistic in their approach. The Valentinian school was exceptional: According to Brakke, there is evidence in the works of Epiphanius (*Panarion*; Williams 2009) that these Gnostics accepted and co-operated with the emerging system of successive episcopal apostolic claim. Correspondingly the same weighs in on the argument that rather than being exclusive they were open – that is syncretistic (Brakke 2012:256). Irenaeus (*Adv Haer* 1; Schaff 1885a:591), for one, responded to the allegories of Gnosticism and their mythology-adopting methods which would curb these new influences.

These adopted methods proved useful and effective, and it became more apparent in the post-Constantinian era when Christianity had a political arm. Amongst the strategies Brakke (2012:259-260) notes the following:

- A mythical reading of the Scriptures through allegory would emphasize unity of the Scriptures and clarify the faulty thinking. Seemingly this proves how both the deviant heretics (Gnostics) and the orthodox leaders used the same methodology since, as already established, the Gnostics engaged in the symbolic interpretation of Scripture – Marcion serves as a good example. This proves that Christianity was affected by Hellenism.
- The establishment of a rule of faith which would set boundaries for appropriate Scriptural use, can also be taken as a reaction to the Marcionite canon.
- The exaltation of one's views against those of a marginalized heretical opponent would give room for enforcement through legislature, as it is evident that councils gained eminence.

These methods appear to have been entrenched in hermeneutical methodology, a main flaw that was the great capacity the methods retained for manipulation by the proponents. As Gnosticism has distorted the diversity (cf. Brakke 2012), this classification of the deemed deviants can be understood as a stage in the build-up of the delineation of orthodoxy. Brakke (2012), whilst insisting that there was much diversity within Christianity, asserts that this was also manifested in later centuries despite the aspiration for homogeneity. For him the Gnostics were simply another Christian ideology, not necessarily deviant as classified by the heresiologists. Brakke can be placed on the continuum of scholars that has deciphered the developments within Christianity to have been self-defining, 'although Irenaeus and others hoped to eliminate diversity and establish a single church with a single truth, their efforts...contributed to the rich multiplicity of the imperial Christian culture' (Brakke 2012:260).

The firm reaction of the heresiologists against Gnosticism, despite the urge and relevance of their claims in support of unity and authentic teaching, imply the formation of a dualistic exclusive complex. Marksches (2003:32), in his discussion of the *Refutation of All Heresies* of Hippolytus of Rome (5.6, 3f, 22, 1; Schaff 1885e:104-105,

132), alludes to the 'Naassenes' (knowers), possibly labelling them snakes (since *Naas* is the Hebrew word for snake). Hippolytus stated how they had been disillusioned in their philosophic quests. Furthermore, it appears as if Epiphanius of Salamis could not distinguish rumour from fact in his *Medicine Chest against Heresies* (*Pan Haer*). The enraged Christian bishop appeared more determined polemically to stamp out the divergent ideology, labelling the antagonists 'borboritai' (*Pan Haer* 2.26.3.5; Williams 2009:93), a Greek term that can be translated 'the dirty ones' (Markschies 2003:36). Markschies also argued that the delineation that saw the ostracising of these groups was a later development, for they had been affiliated within the Christian association only until the emergence of the self-defining orthodoxy movement (*Pan Haer* 2.29.6.6; Williams 2009:128; Markschies 2003:36). These views show the exclusive self-defining continuum that was building up in Christianity – Brakke (2012) regards it as a distortion of diversity under the term 'Gnostic', whilst Markschies (2003) observes that there were more rhetorical attacks than fact. The path to ecumenical orthodoxy was enhanced by an endeavour towards an exclusive uniformity.

#### **5.5.3.3.3 Deduced view**

The cultic emergence of Christianity was a function of the self-defining continuum. As seen in the parallel review with second-temple Judaism, the process through which Christianity would re-define itself, then as a philosophy, alienated it more from its Jewish roots. Additionally, an encultured exclusivity implied the emergence of an orthodoxy versus heresy complex that would define the borders within Christianity itself. Gnosticism served as a great evidence for diversity within early Christianity, that possibly would be stifled in the endeavours against Gnosticism by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, for example. Despite the apparent triumph of that emerging homogeneity that was also derived from Hellenism, a consideration that validated the hypothesis had to be made regarding the places that were not exposed to Hellenism due to geographical reasons, for example. This would entail the lack of the enculturation element in the Christianity that was prevalent in these places.

In the next section an antithetical validation of the significance of Hellenism as a catalyst is considered, because of the failure of the ecumenical orthodoxy due to inadequate Hellenistic enculturation.

## **5.6 DIVERSITY IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY – AN ANTITHESIS TO ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY**

In this section the question is asked whether the significance of Hellenism can be ascribed to places it did not fully permeate. Despite a uniform message in the early nascent church, another apparent reality was the multi-diverse audience as a result of geographical dynamics. According to Davidson (2004:154), not much is known about the spread of the good news by the early apostles to different audiences. The apostles were associated with the places where they worked, as attested to by tradition such as in the apocryphal book of Acts. Of those who went to culturally divergent places from Rome, Thomas is associated with the gospel in India and Persia. Despite the disputed credibility of the sources, a Syrian sect of Christians in Malabar authenticated Thomas as the founder of the church in Southwestern India (Davidson 2004:154).

Moreover, some churches claim native converts as pioneers. As an example, the biblical account of the Ethiopian official in Acts 8:26-38 may imply that the official would spread the message in his locality. This had implications on the type of practice that would result in the different areas with their different cultures. This thereby renders the fact that as much as Hellenism would be an apparent reality as argued for by the study, it would not in all cases be a major catalyst in some areas as to the resultant orthodoxy.

The researcher concurs with this argument of Davidson. The multi-diverse audience of Christianity that entailed all these cultural dynamics, must be taken into consideration. Later on, Hellenistic acculturation in the face of that reality would not be completely successful. The implication would be that the later councils had to enforce orthodoxy on certain people, because of the divergently established movements that had possibly arisen there.

### **5.6.1 A cultural blend**

To only focus on the growth of the churches in the Graeco-Roman world, without giving attention to the other regions, short-changes the history of Christianity. As Christianity was also spread by native converts in their own areas, it follows that ‘these places inherited very different cultures from Hellenised cities of Asia Minor or Europe’

(Davidson 2004:155). In Africa, for example, Davidson notes how diverse African influences would become part of the Christian blend by the end of the first generation of Christians. Communities such as the Syrian acculturated Edessa serve as a good example, as they developed a unique liturgy and theology which differed from Hellenism. This concurs with the theory of enculturation of Roldanus (2006), and highlights the fact that ecumenical orthodoxy thrived where proper ground in terms of Hellenisation and separation from Jewish elements were made. The Donatist movement would serve as a good example of how a less Hellenised/Romanised North Africa could resist Christian practices from the Latin West.

Davidson (2004:155) also hints on the existence of a Syro-Mesopotamian Christian settlement in Nisibis and Edessa, which was eastern in its orientation. If this is true, it could also apply to Roman North Africa and would be evident of the shaping of the history of Christianity within an African context. This argument of the different socio-cultural areas establishes the need to look at all the dynamics in relation to ecumenical orthodoxy. Since this would imply that, where the native structure of cultural practices would be maintained against Hellenism, the form of Christianity practiced in those regions would be divergent from those enforced through the councils even despite political intervention by the emperor. This could also explain the remnants of Semitism coupled with native practices in certain churches claiming descentance from North African Christianity.

### **5.6.2 North African Christianity**

Tilley (2012:383) made significant observations in this context, the first being a reference to a multi-diverse culture. The variety of influences in a culture resulted from various interactions such as trade. There was trade between the Libyans, Egypt, Greece, and the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians had settlements in North Africa and actually found the city of Carthage. Despite the conquests of Rome, the Romanization of North Africa was only partial, with a strong presence in the coastal lands and where there were garrisons (cf. Tilley 2012:382).

It serves to mention that the Punic religion survived obliteration from the Roman religious influence, though it was mostly assimilated. This analysis of the background to North Africa has implications on the ability of ecumenical orthodoxy to have surfaced

where there was inadequate enculturation in the form of Hellenism. There appears to have actually been Jewish links with the Christianity that was prevalent in North Africa. The works of Tertullian is explored with regards to this subject.

#### **5.6.2.1 Remnants of Jewish Christianity**

The works of Tertullian (c.160-c.225 CE) are one of the literary sources for proof of African Christianity in the first three centuries. The catacombs are also archaeological evidence of early Christianity in Africa. The Sabratha, Khenchela, and ancient Mascula (three tombs) prove the existence of Christians before AD 300. These are in Tunisia, though there are no information as to the type of church that existed there (Tilley 2012:386). The vagueness concerning the origins of Christianity in the regions of North Africa resonates with the Semitic roots of Punic religion, which was the native religion in that area. Unlike India where Thomas could be claimed as the founding apostle, or Andrew for Scotland, there can be no founding apostle associated with Africa. The praxis suggests alternative origins. Tilley (2012:386) asserts that

most scholars connect Christianity to Jewish communities in and around Carthage. Evidence includes Hebraisms in their Latin Bible, Tertullian's familiarity with oral traditions later enshrined in the Talmud and Mishnah...African Christianity also exhibits some of the hallmarks of 'Jewish Christianity' of the first centuries, such as the apostolic decree of Acts 15:19 treated as normative as late as Tertullian (*Apol.* 9.13); the Christian observance of some Jewish festivals as late as 436 (*fourth Council of Carthage, canon 89*).

This observation by Tilley of Jewish roots in African Christianity sheds light on the hypothesis that is implied as consequent of a schism between Christian and Jewish relations. Just to mention the use of Greek as the first language by African Christians, which intrinsically was the *lingua franca* of the Diaspora Jews, paints early African Christianity as very Semitic. The involvement of laity in African Christianity is notable: First it is a fact that the local churches were governed by *seniors laici* (a board of lay elders); coupled to this is the idea that, despite the rulings of the synods, consensus decisions would not be overwhelmingly imposed upon local churches (Tilley 2012:386-387). This was enough to entail friction between African Christianity with the emerging orthodoxy that would be enforced universally.



Since the hypothesis entails that the Jewish-Christian schism propelled Christianity towards Hellenism, an alternative narrative can be anticipated as to the success of ecumenical orthodoxy in regions of North Africa.

#### **5.6.2.2 Intransigent roots against ecumenism**

Apart from the established Jewish roots found in North African Christianity, there were several other features that made it capable to resist the wave of uniformity that was built towards Nicaea. According to Tilley (2012:387), the church's tradition was one that saw regular episcopal meetings to address issues of mutual interest, despite the fact that the resolution would not be imposed upon the respective dioceses. Information proving the widespread bishopric and meetings is available, such as the first reported council supposedly held in AD 220 under the oversight of Agrippinus. Tilley correctly asserts that they affirmed the importance of the enculturation element for the success of ecumenical orthodoxy. During the era of persecution and that of apology, it appears that the intransigence of North African Christianity is unquestioned (discussed below).

#### **5.6.2.3 A resistant martyrdom**

*Acta Martyrum Scillitanorum*, an early document of martyrdom, shows a stubborn resistance by Christians in North Africa's *Proconsularis* to offer divine honours to the emperor. Speratus who was the Christian spokesperson, balanced intransigence with apologists as a model showing that, despite Christians being a loyal citizenry, they would not worship any king save Christ (Tilley 2012:388). Tertullian's *De Corona*, for example, mentioned the incident of a Christian soldier who refused to wear the laurel crown and was implicated for this as non-compliant to military protocol.

With the need for political stability, imperial edicts issued between AD 235 and 284 by Valerian and later Decius, seeking to ensure the *pax deorum* (peace of the gods), fronted a challenge to the church as these edicts required universal compliance. It appears that it affected the rest of the congregants who, according to Cyprian (*De Lap* 25; Schaff 1885e:541-542), were then compromised. The edicts would even be targeted towards the church leadership and upper-class citizenry. Refusal to sacrifice or commit acts of pagan worship would result in loss of property, exile and ultimately

execution. In view of renewed persecution, intransigence in some cases waned. This dilemma of the believers' reaction to persecution saw the birth of a form of stratification amongst believers, and a controversy between two authorities – the charismatic and the ordained authority (Tilley 2012:390). All these features caused the African church to be out of sync with the movement for ecumenical orthodoxy that later came to be.

#### **5.6.2.4 Uncompromised position**

Many Christians, including clergy, failed to stand firm as Christians in the face persecution. They compromised and sacrificed according to Cyprian in *On the Lapsed* 25 and *Epistles* 39.3-5, 55 (Schaff 1885e:564, 565). Some bishops led their whole congregations into compromise. This resulted in a debate amongst the Christians as to what composed the guilt. Whichever way, the ones who apostatized by sacrificing were issued *libelli* (certificates of compliance) to show that they were accepted again by the state, but not by the church. In the church were two groups: The *sanctes* who stood firm against the *lapsi* –the fallen ones (Tilley 2012:389), and the *confessores* who had gone through imprisonment and torture and did not compromise. The *confessores* had an intrinsic authority in ecclesiastical matters rooted in their evident resoluteness. These reactions to persecution set the tone for an African response to authoritative ecumenical councils.

Tilley (2012:391) observes how martyrdom 'reinforced Christian identity as requiring resistance to state authority'. This was evident in the Donatist-Catholic controversy which had at its heart the issue of the strict construction of Christian identity. Roldanus (2006:174) makes the same observation referring to the thriving of the native Donatist church in Carthage and Numidia, even in later centuries, despite imperial intervention. He attributes this endurance to the 'African radicalism of the preceding century' (Roldanus 2006:174). The Donatists held a hierarchy of commitment between ordinary believers and monks, and they put ordination and baptism on the same footing with regards to the moral standing of one who administered it. Added to this, 'the Donatists had their constituency mainly among the original population, like the Berbers....the Catholic Church had never made an effort to evangelize the Berbers in their own language' (Roldanus 2006:174).

Far from having only linguistic and cultural implications, these facts had economic results upon the local Berber population as they were economically segregated as a lower class to the Romans. According to Roldanus (2006:175), the Donatist filled the gap as they were the first to evangelize the Berbers. Doing this they succeeded in enculturating their form of Christianity amongst the marginalized Berbers. Roldanus (2006:175) asserts that the Donatists had success where 'native linguistic and cultural traditions were most vigorous'. This entails the absence of an emphatic Hellenistic enculturation as a catalyst, and affirms the antithetical confirmation of the hypothesis.

#### **5.6.2.5 Deduced view**

The researcher concurs with the above observations by Tilley and Roldanus, also as affirmed by Cyprian's *Epistles* about the three features resulting from the resistance of North African Christianity to ecumenical orthodoxy: First, the fact that they had Hebraic roots, entailed that these Christians could connect more to Jewish Christianity than the newly self-defined philosophy. This would also be in line with the hypothesis proving that where ties were not significantly cut from Judaism, ecumenical orthodoxy would not gain ground. Second, the fact that these territories were not intensely Romanized, would also argue for the necessity of the cultural factor in contextualization, in that case the Hellenisation of Christianity. Added to this is the intransigent nature of African Christian practice in relation to persecution, which implies that where native practice was preserved, it would not be easy introducing new elements of Hellenistic philosophy despite imperial intervention (as will be noted in the review of the Donatist controversy, which was a theological controversy preceding the Nicene controversy, though geographically separated). The North African divergence from the call for uniformity is therefore a lesson in relation to acculturation of Christianity to respective cultures.

### **5.7 IRENAEUS' INNOVATION OF ORTHODOXY**

In this section an attempt is made to affiliate philosophy with the emergence of the councils, and how this saw through the emergence of orthodoxy. According to Minns (2012:261), Irenaeus, in his attempts at defining the boundaries of authentic Christianity, ended up redefining the ancient traditions himself, since in an effort to undo wrong, he ended up changing certain elements of what was conventional. An example is the adage 'you should become a thief to catch a thief', which he drew from

Plato's distinction of 'being and becoming'. In comparison with Justin Martyr, despite a uniform continuum between the two, Irenaeus showed much innovation and complexity of organization and notably a richness of sources he referred to. Irenaeus achieved a novelty of his own (cf. Minns 2012:263) in urging believers towards a universal orthodox faith rather than attacking outsiders, which is, as formerly done by apologists and polemics, aimed at entrenching Christianity amongst outsiders. As polemics took the form of mainly denouncing Judaic roots, and apologists courted the attention of the Roman world, Irenaeus had slightly different objectives: 'Irenaeus' church was not defined by complete hostility or opposition to the non-Christian world' (Minns 2012:265). He rather was the 'first exponent of a catholic Christian orthodoxy' influencing many after him like Athanasius of Alexandria (Davidson 2004:228). Athanasius stood central in the Arian controversy in the post-Nicene Council era after the death of Alexander (cf. Leithart 2010:160).

#### **5.7.1 Formulated opinion**

Could Hellenism have a significantly formative role in the emergence of the conciliar orthodoxy that appeared after AD 325? The above deductions concerning the foundations of the orthodoxy to emerge assisted the post-Nicene Councils that drew much from the agitating ideological wars amongst believers, fuelled to a great degree by the new nature of the Christian faith as an idea or philosophy, rather than charismatic praxis. Although Irenaeus could have been indebted to Hellenism more for prose than philosophy, he seemingly always remained committed to the apostolic biblical tradition. Yet his theology was one of reaction to the heretical movements, this further entrenching the hypothesis that ecumenical orthodoxy came about as a response to Hellenism (for example, the Gnostic heresies). As orthodoxy emerged, it also grew coupled to an emerging episcopal hierarchy.

### **5.8 THE BIRTH OF AN EPISCOPAL HIERARCHY**

The emergence of an orthodoxy resulted in stressing the organization and leadership. The emerging idea of a *Katholikos* (universal faith) (Davidson 2004:169) served as a catalyst to the preceding fact. Therefore, an emphasis on a unified church would obviously entail an inevitability of systems to guarantee homogeneity. Despite the existence of apostolic leadership since the charismatic Christianity established by

Jesus, as already noted, one has to appreciate the fact that this leadership changed due to the dynamics that shaped Christianity in different phases.

### **5.8.1 A monarchical bishopric**

Kyrtatas (2005:62) asserts a 'faulty establishment' from Eusebius that monarchical bishops had always been the leaders of the church. He is correct, since the writings of Eusebius represented the intended trajectory of the Christianity that was a consequent of ecumenical orthodoxy. This is why Eusebius rewrote the narrative of Christianity from the vantage point of the then established orthodoxy. According to Kyrtatas (2005:63),

[t]he world of primitive Christianity was led for about two generations, and in some cases for an even longer period, by itinerants and other charismatics...The...city-based administration and the network that kept various communities together was obviously a rather late arrival...Although the origins of synodal organizations are not well known...in struggles against Gnostics and Marcionites, the Christian communities gradually handed over the leadership held by itinerant charismatics to city-based and learned monarchs.

This observation of Kyrtatas is tallying with the hypothesis of how Christianity was entering into different phases, also as attested to by Vermes (cf. 2012:25-27), that there was a shift from charismatic faith to one of logic, which was later enforced by authorities. As Christianity entered the respective phases in response to challenges such as heresy, for example the Gnostics, the bulwark of orthodoxy needed a strong establishment to maintain it, and this would define the role of bishops. Traditionally Ignatius (*Eph* 4.1-6.2; Schaff 1885a:101) appeared to have been the chief proponent of the sole *episkopos* (monarchical bishop) over a region with an ultimate authority (cf. Mitchell 2012:123). Basically, it appears that this type of leadership resonated well with an idea of a universal church.

The rise of dogma required a strong system of leadership. Kyrtatas observes that by Eusebius' time orthodoxy was equal to a 'well organized federation of semi-independent monarchical bishops' (Kyrtatas 2005:63). Constantine's endeavours at their height would take the form of ecumenical councils or universal synods. Hence leadership of the church was key in the build-up to an ecumenical orthodoxy. The role

of the leaders in handling dogma would increase, as they had to establish a uniform thought, specifically because of Hellenisation and philosophy.

Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 4.15; Schaff 1885k:280) balanced the heroic martyrdom of bishops with their denunciation of heresy. Polycarp was a good example, as he refused many chances of recantation and cursing Christ, embracing the flames of martyrdom instead. He even called Marcion the firstborn of satan (*Hist Eccl* 4.14; Schaff 1885k:277-278). With this the father of ecclesiastical history sought to portray the dynamic of orthodoxy versus heresy to have been an important chapter in the chronicles of the church, with specific reference to the role of the bishops. This is why Ignatius is reviewed below.

### **5.8.2 Ignatius of Antioch: Harmony under the clerical monarchy**

Brent (2009) postulates that Ignatius equated heresy to disorder, and orthodoxy as the opposite to schism. According to Ignatius' *Letter to the Trallians* 2.1-2 and 3.2 (Schaff 1885a:110-111), Ignatius exalted the office of bishop in this particular regard with reference to Polybius. He equated subjection to the bishop as unto Christ, also urging for the inevitability of the bishop: 'You must not engage in activity apart from the bishop' (*Trall* 2.1; 3.2; Schaff 1885a:110-111; cf. Brent 2009:30). This assumed eminence of the episcopal leader was formative to ecumenical orthodoxy, and not intrinsic to apostolic Christian origins, which were Hebraic.

Ignatius also acknowledged the presbyteries as a collegiate of likeness to the apostles. This showed an endeavour to associate the emerging bishopric with the apostolic tradition, which was an implication of the imposition of new elements within Christianity. Whereas there could be influentially pious charismatics who could be renowned for prophecies or speaking in tongues, yet the bishop could not be despised, because the charismatics were schismatic elements, whilst the bishop was a silent unifier (Brent 2007:30). This emphasis on the authority of the bishop as superseding that of the charismatics, emphasizes the trajectory then taken by Christianity to move away from the charismatic Judaist background as part of its self-definition.

After the schism, the Hellenistic acculturation swayed Christianity. In a convergence of metaphysical philosophy, theology, and ecclesiastical politics, Ignatius in the letter to the *Philadelphians* 1.1 (Schaff 1885a:130) had put the productive silence of the

bishop against the frenzied babblings of the ecstasies. He added in his letter to the *Magnesians* 8.2 (Schaff 1885a:104) that the silent bishop typified the mysterious silence of God from which Christ proceeded (Brent 2007:31). From this silence of the bishop the unity and harmony for a fragmenting schismatic church would emanate in the same manner as Christ has proceeded from the Father. This can be understood to be reflective of the philosophical mindset that formulated arguments for the monarchical bishopric. It implies, as also observed by Brent, that Ignatius' idea of a pre-eminent monarchical bishop as a new element in Christian leadership, faced resistance from the 'collegiate and presbyteral forms of church government *who felt overtaken* by a single authority figure' (Brent 2007:31). Though it was seemingly enforced on them, this was a new emerging element which would grow with the urge for a unified orthodoxy, and this was also to be mainly attributed to self-definition which, at that stage, was primarily the Hellenistic acculturation.

Brent attributes the defences that Ignatius formulated against this resistance to his Hellenistic background of Antioch in Syria – this was during the second sophistic phase, as noted earlier. Dio Chrysostom propagated that forced governance was not resonant with humanity. Metropolitan governance would rather be successful, if it was seen as a voluntary musical chorus where all participants would contribute to a harmony. The political Hellenistic coinage was *homonoia* (concord), alluding to metropolitan governance: Like a properly tuned lyre's strings these *homonoia* politics played out amongst city states. Against the charge of attempting to create an episcopal polity with monarchical authority, Ignatius would use this concept in his defence (Brent 2007:32).

Ignatius' idea was even more subtle in its agency, as he urged the pre-eminence of the bishop by using the term *prokathemenos* (president). This does not appear as an outright ploy for the entrenchment of episcopal power, since he implied *homonoia* through symbiotic relationships amongst the collegiate and the bishop, whilst in a prudent tone, submission is mandated upon the laity and not the presbyterate or deacons. In his *Letter to Smyrna* 8.1 (Schaff 1885a:147) Ignatius exclaimed that whilst the laity had to flee from schismatic elements, they were to 'follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, *also to follow the presbyter as...apostles*', because God commanded deacons to be respected (Brent 2007:32). Whoever would betray the

bishop was in fact betraying God (cf. *Eph* 5.3; Schaff 1885a:84; Lohr 2010:106). The collegiate would be maintained around the bishop, symbolised by their sitting in a horseshoe, with the enthroned episcopate in the middle. According to the *Didache*, the collegiate of presbyters (bishops) was elected to quell schisms from the charismatic chaos in Syria. As they did not want a focused hierarchy, Ignatius responded that this would bring harmony as separate units of the *ecclesiae* (churches) worked in solidarity and not in subjugation. Ignatius' argument was replete with an appeal to 'pagan, secular political concepts', in order to establish a Matthean version of Petrine ecclesiastical authority (cf. Brent 2007:34).

Brent and Kyrntatas correctly argue that the episcopal power appeared to have been a later derivation of heathen philosophical and political perspectives. The ideas of *homonoia* and *prokathemenos* imply that, despite the fact that the episcopate was mentioned in the early apostolic church, the form of the episcopate was then transformed and could therefore claim authority. This further entrenched the self-defining influence of Hellenism and the schism upon the very form of Christian leadership. The monarchical episcopate became a universal link between the respective catalysts, as it appeared to derive from all three catalysts.

These arguments of Brent, together with his derivations from Ignatius, are offering certain conclusions with regards to the episcopate and its growing authority. First, the episcopal authority appeared to have been a function of Hellenistic enculturation, the schism, and political influence. This is deduced from the arguments in defence of the newly assumed authority, as championed by Ignatius, with reference to the Hellenistic concept of *homonoia*, as well as the philosophical argument for the eminence of the bishop. In light of the schism, the monarchical episcopate had authority over the charismatic influence. Second, the political undertones are derived from Hellenistic concepts, and also apparent in the establishment of a hierarchy whilst claiming there was equality. Eusebius and Ignatius formed the bias that was consequential of the emerging hierarchy. This would be conclusive in the final formative stages of ecumenical orthodoxy, as these structures would consummate in authoritative councils that would enforce dogma.



Inevitably the episcopacy was developing politically, despite protests being a result of the convergence of Hellenistic ideals, politics, and remnants of Judaic practice. As it is discussed below, the episcopacy's development was an indication of the connection between the three factors and that they were not really detached from each other. Therefore, the hierarchical bishopric was some sort of politics, even before the emperor intervened. All the considerations imply that the episcopal hierarchy would be very instrumental in the self-definition of the orthodoxy.

## 5.9 SUMMARY

Could Hellenism have a formative role in the emergence of the conciliar orthodoxy that appeared after AD 325? Seemingly the preceding schism became the nurturing environment for the birth of Christian philosophy. Justin Martyr, the first sophist, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, became an indicator of the emerging Christianity at the turn of the second century. Christianity, a rival to pagan religions, jostled for a position in antiquity (Drodge 2012). The second sophistic saw Christianity positioning itself as a *paedeia* (school). The engulfing of diversity and emphasis upon homogeneity saw a cultic emergence (Rives 2005). Despite the drive for a uniform movement (cf. *Adv Haer*), the geographic dispersion of the Christian movement would entail that cultural diversity could work against a drive for uniform practice (Davidson 2004). North Africa became a specific case of intransigent faith that would continue to be resilient against catholicity as an antithetical argument to the hypothesis. Coupled with these was the development of an episcopal hierarchy that bound the uniformity (Ignatius *Magnesian*). The ecclesiastical polity, however, became a tying link with imperial politics given their crucial roles at the councils (Kyrtatas 2005).

This pivots the investigation to review the third catalyst of imperial involvement/politics in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy.

## CHAPTER 6

### POLITICS: IMPERIAL INFLUENCE AND ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

As a continuation of the self-defining trajectory that had been incited by the Jewish-Christian schism, Christianity entered the phase of Hellenistic enculturation. According to Justin Martyr, a Christian philosopher/apologist, Christianity embraced a Greco-Roman shade. The homogeneity that came with the enculturation, entailed the entrenchment of an orthodoxy. Some places retained certain cultural practices that entailed divergence, with the North African Donatists as a case in particular. With the orthodoxy also emerged a hierarchy of church leaders. The bishops would be very much monarchical in their disposition, reinforcing their authority through the emerging orthodoxy.

This brought the researcher to review the political catalyst, stipulated in the hypothesis, as the final catalyst in the study of ecumenical orthodoxy. Hellenism has been explored for its significance in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy in accordance with the hypothesis and in an antithetical review. The monarchical hierarchy appeared to have been the emerging link and a factor of the self-defining impetus.

The monarchical bishopric became significant as a link between the emerging superstructure of Hellenised Christianity and the emerging politics of Constantine who was to see a *Nova Roma* (New Rome). The emperor's endeavours for a unified Empire through a unified religion would be deemed timely by a leadership that was calling for a homogenous practice of faith. Due to the instrumentality of the ecumenical councils, where the leaders were looking for unity at the instigation of the emperor, it implied that the crucial element of an episcopal leadership was inevitable for the success of any political/imperial intervention.

#### 6.2 THE INTERSECTION

The Hellenised Christianity that evolved against the backdrop of persecution, found a favourable environment: From being a *religio illicita* (illegal/illegitimate religion), it

caught air with the emperor. In light of this, a review of events leading up to the council of Nicaea is done below, as an attempt of evaluating all dynamics that resulted in the era of Christianity that emanated from this council onwards. In this evaluation the question is asked about the causality of things, against the backdrop of one of the greatest controversies in the epoch of early Christianity, which was consummated or cultivated by a council, and seemingly this appears to be the incident that has shed more light on the emergence of Christian political thought.

### **6.2.1 A new era**

The Christians were persecuted by Constantine's predecessors (Roldanus 2006), like Galerius and Maximin (Cameron 2012:540). Constantine's arrival on the scene of Roman politics brought about a new dynamic. His victory at the Melvian bridge at the Tiber River can be associated with Julius Caesar's Rubicon – the crossing of which is associated with victories that gave substantial and historical significance to both. Whereas Julius Caesar became sole emperor 'Augustus', undoing the triumvirate after his victory at the Rubicon, Constantine set in a series of events that caused his sole emperorship and undid the tetrarchy after centuries of shared rule (*DMP* 44.5-6; Schaff 1885f:486-487; Lenski 2006:71). After Constantine assumed a religious triumph, he regarded the Melvian Bridge as the inception of ecclesiological politics or imperial intervention in the church, whichever way the imperial patronage became an element in the definition of Christianity. This has been established by numerable Constantinian scholars. It was, however, a trajectory that would be protracted slightly by the alliance turned rivalry with Licinius (cf. Lenski 2006). In the review the well-documented history of Constantine is researched from a revisionist approach. Here the impact of the emperor is related to the two preceding catalysts, thereby ascertaining what the main cause to the emerging orthodoxy was.

#### **6.2.1.1 Debunking the myth**

Against the background of the above-mentioned events, there has been an emerging and evolving view in respect to the role of the emperor in the church. The following questions must be answered:

- Did the emperor become the main bishop as claimed by some scholars?
- Did he then conclude or give the final word in respect to church issues?

- What was his role in the emerging Hellenised movement that has distanced itself from its Jewish roots?

#### **6.2.1.2 Towards unity in uniformity**

Amongst the many pro-Christian policies of Constantine, some of which came in the form of legislation such as laws restricting Jews in their anti-Christian escapades, the emperor enacted laws for the building of churches, and not pagan temples (*Hist Eccl* 10.6; Schaff 1885k:613-614). Added to this, he banned ancient rites and promoted open worship for Christians. The reign of Constantine became the victorious age of Christianity. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 10.6; Schaff 1885k:613-614) compared the great deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt by Moses to the actions of the emperor, and concluded that both had a typological significance of God's providence through the emperor.

This study, according to the objectives of the research, focuses on how the emperor facilitated the meeting of councils as instruments of dealing with diversity and an urging of unity. He had a great desire for peace in the Empire and would not allow that a divided Christian movement counteract his great plans. This research shows how the councils came about as consummation in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy with their ecumenical nature, giving form to a concept that had already emerged irrespective of the political dynamics.

### **6.3 THE CONTROVERSIES AND IMPERIAL INVOLVEMENT**

The Arian and Donatist controversies culminated in councils and synods respectively, with the council being the more emerging systematic way of establishing orthodoxy and handling of dissent. This became the way of consolidating dominant views and undoing the diversity in certain respects (Leithart 2010:84).

#### **6.3.1 The Donatist controversy: An antithetical look at ecumenical orthodoxy**

The African fall-out between Numidia and Carthage emerged over the appointment of Caecilianus as successor to the bishop, without the consent of the Numidians (Frend 2012:522). Citing many anomalies to the illegitimacy of Caecilianus, the Donatists of Numidia claimed that he had actually persecuted the *confessores* (those that had resisted during the persecution) by intercepting food that had been brought to them

during their imprisonment (Leithart 2010:155). The other matter was concerning the *traditores* (those who were found guilty of having handed over sacred books during the Diocletian persecution): The *traditores* were still holding sacred offices amidst the fact that there were those who had resisted the authorities as faithful *confessores*.

In researching how North African Christianity had a literalistic approach to faith issues, questions regarding the moral standing of the *lapsi* (fallen) and their capacity to be involved in church offices are of great significance (Tilley 2012:289). This saw a great rift in the church at Carthage and ultimately North Africa. In retaliation, those from Numidia led by Secundus of Tigisita and Purpurius of Limata, appointed Majorinus to the post that automatically made him the primate of all Africa (*Don* 1.16-19; Phillips 1917:50-54; Edwards 2006b:151). Their appointee, however, was murdered in his church (Leithart 2010:156).

#### **6.3.1.1 Resurgent intransigence**

The argument of the Donatists concerned the consecration of an appointed leader and those who committed him to office, since they had fallen out during persecution and hence could no longer be members of the church without rebaptism, whilst the Romans of Carthage argued that these formerly apostatized prelates would not be baptized, but simply have hands laid on them (Roldanus 2006:36, 38). This debate regarding the *traditores* and martyrdom was rather a surface issue, according to Brown (2000:210), who believes that this was stemming from an underlying problem: For him it was a dispute regarding how the church was to relate to the Roman world.

North African Christianity 'had long nurtured a strongly legalistic, rigorist and Pharisaical version of faith, where being Christian meant avoiding worldly contaminants' (Leithart 2010:156). This served to make the controversy entrenched and a threat to a catholic union that had apparently emerged amongst the Roman churches. Optatus (*Don* 1.11.4; Phillips 1917:23) asserted that the schismatics were undoing the catholic union by their dissension and hate.

In concurrence with Leithart and Tilley, the researcher notes how the insistence of North African Christianity on a certain tradition estranged them from the rest of the church, and proved that without thorough Romanisation or Hellenism, ecumenical

orthodoxy would not be entrenched. The mention of inheriting Hebraic exacting traits resonates with the Jewish elements of the faith that could not claim apostolic origins.

#### **6.3.1.2 A reluctant emperor**

Leithart (2010:157) argues that, despite the significance of the synods to the Donatist controversy, the emperor was rather reluctant to involve himself. At first the Donatists were the ones who approached him. Constantine was still convinced, as he had been in the pagan cults, that the role of the priests was sacred, and therefore he retained his *Pontifex Maximus* (high priest) title, allowing the '[p]riestly caste to their duty' (Kraft 1955:160).

A division in the African church was obviously costly to the emperor, but his actions were not imposing (cf. Leithart 2010:157). As the new patron of Christianity, the division was problematic to Constantine, because of the different ideologies between Numidia and the rest. When the facilities for building churches would be released, who would be accountable? The pagan cause which he had conquered at every stage 'with the sign given him' could yet again pose a threat. The Donatist controversy would significantly define the scope of intervention and recommendation by the emperor towards homogeneity (Roldanus 2006:38). The emperor, however, was reactionary towards this (cf. Leithart 2010:157).

The observations by Roldanus and Leithart establish the continuum amongst Constantinian scholars on the involvement of the emperor, since his involvement also established the significant catalyst for ecumenical orthodoxy. Whilst Roldanus (2006) implies an actively involved emperor in this controversy, Leithart (2010) argues for a cautiously withdrawn emperor. Ultimately he was involved and the consummation of the controversy had a conciliar solution. These were key events in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy, like this particular case where the controversy emanated from the issue of ecclesiastical authority. The very fact that the emperor's response was reactionary, emphasizes the idea that imperial intervention was one amongst other catalysts, and in turn the final one in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. The complex from which the controversy stemmed, is seemingly attributable to socio-ethnic and ecclesiastical dynamics – a consequence of self-definition with inadequate

Hellenistic enculturation. The swaying influence of the idea of a universal orthodoxy and universal church appears to have been already established at this juncture.

#### **6.3.1.3 Constantine as the catholic emperor**

Majorian became the Carthagian bishop after the death of the Numidian appointee and wanted answers as to who composed the church and clergy. This was in light of the decree by the emperor to restore property to the church after his victory over Maxentius in AD 312. In other words the question was, Who had the right to receive anything from the benefaction of the emperor (Leithart 2010:156-157)? Majorian appealed to the emperor through Anullinus, the proconsul of North Africa, regarding Caecilianus, the controversial bishop, desiring a judgement from the emperor. In reaction the emperor wrote to Miltiades, the bishop of Rome, setting forth his worries about the schism in 'those provinces which Divine Providence *had* freely entrusted to his devotedness, and in which there was a great population' (*Hist Eccl* 10.5; Schaff 1885k:608). The emperor showed his respect for the unity of the church, as well as its ecumenical and catholic agenda of uniformity, stating, 'I have such reverence for the legitimate Catholic Church that I do not wish you to leave schism or division in any place' (*Hist Eccl* 10.5; Schaff 1885k:612).

The remarks by the emperor in a letter to the monarchical head of the universal church show how the idea of a universal orthodoxy had already been entrenched in a homogenous view of the church. In this case, the emperor just acknowledged the then situation of the Catholic Church, posing as a universally uniform institution. This further establishes the hypothesis that political intervention consolidated homogenous forces already at play. Constantine appeared to have acknowledged the authority of the bishops, and in this matter he deflected the issue to be handled by the episcopacy. Only after the failure of several councils did he initiate direct intervention. According to Leithart (2010:157), Constantine at this point treated the church 'as a separate polity governed by its bishops'. This conclusion is made because of Eusebius and Optatus, who were champions of the emerging orthodoxy, hence this may have simply been the politically correct side of things against the other views. The prior establishment in the research of a heretical minority against the orthodox majority would imply the entanglement of the controversy within ecclesiastical, social-ethnic dynamics, in which

politics was a consequence of an ecclesiastical polity. There were politics within the church and this was a contributor to ecumenical orthodoxy.

The analysis of Leithart on this scenario differs from traditional scholars, and shows a reluctant emperor who was invited to sit in councils not initiated, and forced orthodoxy (cf. Reuver 1996). According to this view, the Donatists and not Constantine instigated the process that saw the supposed subordination of the church to the emperor, and not the other way around.

#### **6.3.1.4 The Donatist resistance**

Despite the emperor's pleas for peace, a determined shadow bishop appeared in Carthage. Donatus, from whom the name of the controversy is derived, was seemingly very militant in championing the cause of an independent Christianity that was free from imperial intervention, and of African descent (Frend 2012:522). He was condemned for his policy of rebaptizing *traditores* at a Roman council in AD 313 (Drake 1995:213, 219). Because Donatus did not yield, the emperor summoned another council at Arles. This was an attempt to review the Roman council, as well as an exhortation that showed the sentiment of the emperor with regards to the persistent schism. In his pleas the emperor reiterated the term 'catholic', coupled with terms such as 'law' and 'religion', arguing that he felt it a divine duty upon him to maintain the peace of the 'Catholic Church'.

Leithart (2010:159) states that Constantine's interest in a unified church was apparent. Given the seemingly prevalent structures of the bishops through which the emperor sought to intervene in the councils, the notion of a universally uniform organization seems obvious – in other words the emperor was advocating for the protection of a catholic orthodoxy. Constantine spurned schisms, since they were divergent elements in a harmoniously homogenous organization. The involvement of the emperor at that stage, which was for unity within Christianity, entails the contribution of his political involvement as a consolidator of the newly formed homogeneity. This implies maintenance rather than formulation of the emerging ecumenical orthodoxy.



### 6.3.1.5 An alternative narrative

Edwards gives a different nuance to the Donatist story. Arguing that ‘the anecdote was told in the Catholic interest’ (Edwards 2006b:152) and consequently like all history written by the victors, there is an inclined bias that resonates with self-defining exclusivism, as established by the researcher in the writings of Optatus and Eusebius. Edwards (2006b:152) likens the reaction to how Montanism was curtailed (*Hist Eccl* 5.16-17; Schaff 1885k:354-363), concluding that the argument against them was one that roped in issues of episcopal authority, which was a notable feature of ecclesiastical politics. The invectives against schismatics are understood to have been a resurgence of Justin Martyr. This further emphasizes how the Hellenistic acculturated philosophy, which also informed orthodoxy, was enforced by an emerging hierarchy as already established.

Edwards further argues that it is insufficient to make the Donatist standpoint against a fallen clergy a measurement of their ‘outstanding strictness’ as they are generally portrayed (Edwards 2006b:152). Tyconius, who is reputed to be the mentor of Augustine (*De doc Christ* 3.45; Schaff 1885h:806-807) showed much moderation in his Scriptural exegesis, when adapting the wheat and tares model, and arguing that there would always be a mixed group of genuine and not genuine believers in the world, and these are not easily discernible (Edwards 2006b:152).

This establishes the role of ecclesiastical politics with regards to the perceptions concerning the Donatists. The general portrayal of their intransigence was a factor of the urge for a united orthodoxy by the episcopal hierarchy. In concurrence with Roldanus (2006; cf. Optatus *Against the Donatists* 3.3; Phillips 1917:59-70; Edwards 1997:62-68), Edwards notes that the distant relationship with the authorities maintained by the Donatists, was more harmonious with the preceding African political ideology than that of Cyprian (cf. Brent 2007). Contrary to this the Catholics reacted with a kind of patriotism that Edwards (2006b:152) asserts as foreign to the literature of African Christianity.

The preceding would entail that the Donatists were orthodox with regard to organic Christian practice concerning the relation to the Empire. The Roman endearment to the Empire was a foreign emergent and a typical element of ecumenical orthodoxy.

Other scholars have regarded the Donatist controversy as a revolt by the native Berbers against the economic tyranny of Rome in Carthage, citing the Donatists' later alliance with the Circumcellions, which was a nomadic raiding group. This could be the alternative narrative to the Donatist schism. Edwards reflects on the possible reactions of the pagans: 'They must have perceived at least that, with the rise of the episcopate, city was against city' (Edwards 2006b: 153). This deduction by Edwards substantiates the idea that the schisms and controversies took on a political nuance. This became especially true with the entrenchment of an episcopal aristocracy. The culmination of the controversy was the Arles synod, the first council held at imperial instigation. This brings the study to the examination of the role of the emperor in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy.

#### **6.3.1.6 The Arles synod**

Ultimately events led to the synod in Arles. At the expense and initiative of the emperor the bishops assembled at Arles in AD August 314, despite the fact that the Catholics of Rome already had an entrenched position. The meeting became one where the African church tradition was up against that of the Roman church. The emperor, whose only intention was to see brotherly concord, has taken much of a distant role, leaving the deliberations to the bishops. According to Leithart, the emperor, despite his attendance of the sessions, was briefed by the bishops about the decisions (Leithart 2010:159). The fact that the emperor summoned a second council to address the same agenda that had been addressed by another synod, established another precedent, with the implication that 'any emperor *could* claim the right to summon councils *revisiting* earlier decisions with which he disagreed' (Leithart 2010:159). Leithart's observation entails that the church-state relations were redefined by these events, as Constantine's actions would actually become precedents for his successors. Added to this, the demarcation of the contending sides along geographical lines, hints in favour of the antithetical analysis of the hypothesis as seen in the intransigence of the not-so-Hellenised North African Christianity.

The Donatists who were not content with the Arles decision, appealed to the emperor with evidence of *traditores* like Felix who were absolved by the council. Another follow-up council was summoned by the emperor at Milan in 315, and there a final verdict established the entrenched Caecilianus as bishop of Carthage (Barnes 1981:58-60).

The outcome, however, was far from what the emperor wanted: Instead of a united and peaceful church in North Africa, there was more bloodshed (Leithart 2010:160), and the Donatists were victims. Riots broke out as the Donatists retaliated, with reports of attacks on the church by bands of soldiers who had the support of Caecilianus. Children and women were slaughtered in the Basilica (Leithart 2010:161); yet despite this the Donatists stood unrelenting. The emperor reiterated his persuasion of a divine cause in maintaining unity, and the Donatists would incur the 'wrath of God' through the emperor for their stubborn arrogance. For Constantine the Donatists had forfeited mercy, implying that retribution awaited them. Through imprisonment, torture, and death the Donatists paid the price. The emperor had initiated a persecution of these Christians, because they were schismatic (Leithart 2010:161).

Augustine's sentiment regarding these events when he later said the act of the emperor was an '*indulgentia ignominiosissima* (a most disgraceful indulgence)' (Yoder 1984:136), is counter-balanced by the argument he places in 'defence of this coercive suppression of heresy', that is compulsion into the true church (Yoder 1984:136). This is a reiteration of Meissner's observation of how certain groups would elbow out others, entrenching themselves in the formulation of a 'superstructure', a 'catholic church' (Meissner 2000:66). The emperor had an active role in the establishment or rather maintenance of a catholic union, which appears to have been the arguments of Optatus and Eusebius. That a unified church would be convenient for a Christian Empire is in fact ironical, as the emperor persecuted schismatic Christians to maintain the emerging homogenous movement.

Though one cannot with certainty refer to Hellenism as a cause for this particular controversy, yet the nature of the controversy, and how one group would succeed over another (Meissner's cultic process) can be attributable to the nature and form of Christianity that had emerged from their contact with the Roman world. This becomes emphatic of how the redefined Christianity was the agency through which the catalysts (Hellenism and politics) formed the ecumenical orthodoxy. The intervention of the emperor in this case has further diluted the possibility for divergent richness, whilst establishing a form of universal church.

The resilience of the Donatists, however, and their willingness to undergo persecution entailed that the emperor could not quell this (Roldanus 2006:40). The emperor conceded defeat, ending up recalling the Donatist exiles, and urging patience amongst the 'holy Brethren'. Even those who had no regard for the holy law, had to show them mercy and tranquillity. According to Optatus (*Don* 4.2; Phillips 1917:182-185), the emperor mostly used language of grace, citing even the Sermon on the Mount. The church was to endure 'with an unshaken heart the untamed savagery of men who *harassed* the people of the Law of Peace' (Leithart 2010:162). Violence seemingly marred the peace of African Christianity, even up to AD 406 when Catholic clergymen were blinded by some substance that was forced into their eyes. Basically the resistance of the Donatists knew no bounds (Gaddis 2005:126-127). This intransigence of the Donatists can be attributed to the strong cultural roots and different enculturation against the rest of western Christianity.

#### **6.3.1.7 Synthesis of reviews with developed hypothesis**

In harmony with the hypothesis, orthodoxy had become a matter of a dominant group gaining the upper hand over a less dominant group. In this case the Roman church had the final say. However, the instrument of reconciliation was the council, who would bring together representatives from all over the imperial territories and would meet at the emperor's initiative and costs (Roldanus 2006:40).

This leads the researcher to conclude that the council had become the *modus operandi* in establishing ecclesiastical consensus. Before the arrival of the emperor at the ecclesiastical scene, the convening of councils was less exclusive, and they had less authority (cf. Tilley 2012). During that time not everyone had to agree and impose the consensus upon local congregations. The councils/synods under the imperial patronage introduced the idea of 'the Monarch origins of the church' (Davidson 2005), or simply put 'imperial Christianity' (Wickman2017:280), also called 'Constantinianism' (Leithart 2010:177). An analysis of the success or failure of the Arles Council to promote unity would perhaps be a good indicator of how much intervention by the emperor was necessary in ecclesiastical matters.

The Donatist controversy was a prelude to many controversies that would later threaten Christianity under its new protector, the emperor, which itself would soon be

confronted with an emergence of a philosophical debate, imperial pleas for concord and controversially imperial persecution of heresy in what became known as the ecumenical councils. In this lies the significance of the Donatist controversy with its corresponding councils/synods in Arles and Milan, in that they preluded the great Arian controversy that was consummated in the foundation of ecumenical orthodoxy with the ecumenical Nicene Council.

### **6.3.2 The Arian controversy and Nicaea**

#### **6.3.2.1 The Meletian prelude**

A much lesser known, but important controversy, predated the Arian controversy and its corresponding council of Nicaea (Chadwick 1967:124). Precipitated by events that occurred before AD 318, the same time which the Arian controversy emerged, it appears that the Meletian schism was in the shadow of the Arian controversy. The significance of this schism is that it showed the controversial strata in the Alexandrian church, thereby undoing to some degree the dichotomy between Arius and the orthodoxy. This, according to Leithart, was a resurgence of Donatist ideology, Meletius being the embodiment of the intransigent principle (Leithart 2010:165). It would entail a heavy-handedness from the emperor in the later councils, seeing the capacity of this heresy, and thereby threatening the peace of the church and that of the imperial domain.

The controversy originated from the exile of the Alexandrian bishop, Peter, during the persecution of Diocletian, in whose absence Meletius appointed others to fill the vacuum (Leithart 2010:165). When Peter returned, he wanted to restore the *lapsi*, whereas Meletius had a strict Donatist standpoint. Peter faced a martyr's death in AD 311 and was replaced by Achillas, who succumbed to death as well. Ultimately Alexander ascended the episcopate in AD 313 (Chadwick 1967:124). The political entanglements of the schism were apparently manifest in resentment of the episcopal see.

Edwards (2012:557), citing evidence from Barnes (1981:202-203), asserts that Peter was imprisoned when he assigned Melitius not in Alexandria, but specifically for the Thebaid region. Peter died in prison, not having resumed office, which was when Achillas succeeded him (cf. Edwards 2012:557).

Reading this, there is a concurrence between the two scholars on Melitius of Lycopolis' intransigent defiance. Melitius' resentment of his rival claimants to the bishopric perhaps found expression in sympathizing with Arius, a presbyter who would be at ideological odds with Alexander, his superior (Edwards 2012:557). The result of the reaction of the emperor (VC 2.64-72; Cameron 1999:250-251) was exhortation that urged mutual respect between the bishop and his priest, with the priest being in a position to relinquish his opinion. This matter, with reference to episcopal polity, would be settled at Nicaea (Socrates *Hist* 1.9; Schaff 1885m:35, 36). Canons 6 and 7 of the council further entrenched the power of the metropolitan bishop (*Nicene Council* Canon 6, 7) (Tanner 1990). Evident of the emperor's political acumen, since he was crying for peace (*Hist* 1.10; Schaff 1885m:40), was his agency in the encyclicals and canons that resembled more of his political concessions. A compromise was made that recognized the appointees of Meletius, yet this would be conditioned upon his acknowledgement of Alexander as the metropolitan (Edwards 2012:559).

Clearly the intervention of the emperor caused a turbulent political scene, not introducing politics to Christianity. The Meletian prelude to the council of Nicaea further expanded Nicene orthodoxy as a convergence of self-definition, intra-, and inter-ecclesiastical politics. Hence the influence of politics should not be bracketed with reference to the actions of the emperor alone, which rather are consummative of the ecclesiastical polity at play. The impact of Hellenism upon the Christianity that emerged as ecumenical orthodoxy was directly connected to the nature of the controversy that would culminate in a council taken to be universal and enforceable.

#### **6.3.2.2 Philosophical implications**

Seemingly the above-mentioned controversy was rooted in philosophical schisms. Roldanus (2006:71) traces the divisions that rocked the church in the eastern provinces to doctrinal schisms that prevailed in the third century, particularly during the last decades. The theological disputes concerning the person and nature of Christ and his relationship to the Father were debated as a matter of philosophy – Roldanus (2006:7) highlights this as an Origenistic legacy. About three positions strove to be established as orthodoxy, ranging from one that would argue for Christ's humanity, the other derived from God, to one that insisted that Jesus shared his essence with God

the Father. Obviously this was a theological debate, as the emperor himself would discover (Leithart 2010:170). The proponents of these arguments would see through the cultic process of elbowing out each other as they would strive for the title of orthodoxy.

The nature of the Christological controversy as a theological debate obliterated the role of an intervening emperor in Christianity. This was a situation not instigated by imperial intervention, though, as the controversy stemmed from the philosophical understanding that prevailed amongst the Christian minds. In this philosophical war certain groups would come out triumphant, with the orthodox standpoint to be enforced by the emperor and councils, hence the emergence of an ecumenical orthodoxy.

### **6.3.2.3 The eastern focus**

To get a full picture of the mentioned controversy, the emperor's interest in the East is discussed below. After Constantine defeated Licinius, his eastern counterpart who had gone rogue persecuting Christians and breaching truces (cf. Van Dam 2011) in AD 324, he moved to the East for many strategic reasons (*Hist* 1.4; Schaff 1885m:19, 20). First, he was looking for a new Rome, a new capital centred in the east that could attribute to economic and military advantages that would stem from the location of the city Constantinople. Second, an intersection of Asian and European coasts was not only good for the trade, but also for the control of the turbulent East (Roldanus 2006:72).

Barnes (1981:210), however, argues that, besides the economic and military advantages, there was more to the plot. After vanquishing Licinius, the persecutor of Christians according to Eusebius, Constantine had regained the provinces with the highest Christian concentration. He could then consummate his vision of *One Empire, One God, One Emperor* (cf. Leithart 2010:248). This is the reason why the emperor built churches and promoted Christianity in a non-compulsive manner for pagans, in the midst of the popularity of Christianity (cf. Roldanus 2006:71). His efforts for the church during this era earned him the title of *Christ's thirteenth apostle*. As 'the apostle of the new age and of equal success' (Roldanus 2006:71), Constantine was fulfilling his sense of divine duty.

Barnes (2011:108-109) asserts that the move to the East was composite to a broader issue of the new reign – the *New Rome* agenda. The self-assertive tone vocalised in Constantine's letters would then take form in the foundation of a new city. Constantine, who would see the blessed faith increasing under his protective hand (VC 2.28.2; Schaff 1885k:766), would also establish a Christian city, erasing the pagan memories as he razed down Byzantium before rebuilding it (Barnes 2011:111). The bravura in the accounts relating to the founding of the city, established it with much religious connotation, as Constantine was said to have marked the peripheral demarcations under divine inspiration by marching and holding his spear supposedly in obedience to divine biddings (Philostorgius *Hist Eccles* 2.9; 9; Pearse 2002:30; Barnes 2011:111). The expansive development of the Christian capital itself would derive from pagan suppression in the form of confiscations (VC 3.58; 2-3; Schaff 1885k:811).

This process of tearing down shrines and temples and the seizure of any priced material which either was building material or treasure, seemingly continued despite the Edict of Toleration. It can therefore be deduced that Constantinople, just like the Milvian Bridge and the march through Rome, became a *Liberator Ecclesiae* (liberator of the church) theme. Otherwise it could be concluded that Constantine became a Christian tyrant. However, the benefactions towards Christianity were to be seen as an encouragement for pagan conversion (Sozomen *Hist Ecclest* 1.5; Schaff 1885m:344-345). Also many shrines and pagan temples remained untouched (cf. Barnes 2011:111) as the emperor's primary policy was for the promotion of Christianity. Seemingly Sozomen argued that Constantine would first undo the psychological complex that bound paganism together, by demystifying the sacred places and rites (*Hist Ecclest* 2.5; Schaff 1885m:371-372).

In light of the plans of Constantine for the Empire and his newly found complete dominion as sole emperor, it was natural for him to be nauseated by the divisions that were threatening the eastern church. At that time he wanted nothing to threaten the peace after his encounters with the Donatist schism. He would urge unity and concord, though as advised by Hosius of Cordoba, a bishop from Spain, who also happened to be his supervisor, the emperor would realise the theological and philosophical intricacy of the debate he had deemed merely academic (*Hist* 1.6; Schaff 1885m:20-21; Vermes 2012:229). The instigation of Hosius' advice, which possibly entangled the



emperor in the theological net, if he was to be of significance to Christianity, possibly marked the beginning of greater and more direct intervention through and in the councils.

This issue incited debate as to the role of the emperor against that of the bishops, or the emperor as a bishop, something that is still debated and documented inconclusively (Leithart 2010:180-181). The seat that the emperor was to occupy at synods, which had all along been mainly local, but then ecumenical, was something probably defined by the way the Donatist controversy had played out together with the other synods. Undoubtedly he had to be directly involved, for peace was to be secured at all cost throughout the Empire. A review of the different theological ideas from which the Arian controversy emerged, follows below.

#### **6.3.2.4 Theological debate**

Before AD 300 there had been much debate over the person of Jesus. Some of the views had been condemned by local synods (Roldanus 2006:73). The presence of the multiple views to the same thing all become evidence of the cultic process that has been explored in a recent section on Hellenism. There were three distinct extremes namely Docetism, Sabellianism, and Dynamism.

Docetism argued for an 'appearance' or 'semblance' of a human Christ who had suffered. The alternative would be a distinction between Christ and his body in a manner that would entail that he was unaffected by the earthly experiences as he was heavenly (Roldanus 2006:73). This view was popular amongst Gnostics, with whom there was a strict distinction between the earthly and the heavenly. From the Greek verb *dokeō* ('appear'), these ideas were harmonious with texts such as the *Acts of John* (cf. Bonnet 1959). The *Acts of John* 93, for example, hint that Jesus had no footprint, whilst the *Acts of John* 97 (Elliott 1994) reported that Christ interacted with the apostle concerning what is transpiring from a different location, a cave (Bonnet 1959).

Such a philosophical impact hounded the theology of the protagonists in the Arian orthodoxy, despite the attacks by the Church Fathers like Ignatius and actions by synods. Yet these ideas would not just die out, but would rather take a different form

and resurface under different guises. The greatness of the philosophical and theological nature of the debate deemed all other factors subservient to this one. The achievement of a homogenous faith universally had to be preceded by ideologizing this faith and sharing it before any form of compulsion in the form of persecution against heresy could be done.

Young (2012:452) asserted that 'doctrinal discourse was created by argument and counter argument'. According to him the concepts and models adopted would be moulded in the furnaces of controversy.

Sabellianism or 'Christology from above' resonating with a strict monotheistic built-up, claimed that there had always been only one God, and he remained that, though he took different forms, like being the Son, which was just another stage of God's self-revelation. These ideas were influential, especially in Cyrene, which was Sabellius' homeland. Although he was condemned, his ideas resurfaced in AD 260 (Roldanus 2006:73). Doran (1995:89) classifies Noetus, Epigonos, Praxeas, Cleomenes, and the Sabellians under the heading of Monarchianism or Sabellianism. In the writings against heresies of both Hippolytus and Tertullian, they advocated for this strict type of monotheism (*Cont Noet* 3.1; *Cont Prax* 27; Schaff 1885j:1089, 1090). Denounced as it was by these educated leaders of the church, these views appealed to many of the general populace, who were uneducated as per Tertullian's account (*Cont Prax* 3; Schaff 1885j:1045). Sabellianism was consummated in a rebuttal of 'any suprahuman mediating figure between a unique God and...this world...conclusively Sabellius coined the term *huiopater* – "fatherson" (Doran 1995:90).

Controversial as they were, these ideas are indicating that there was a need to clarify the relationship between God the Father and the Son, and who Jesus was in light of the newly found philosophy, combined with a Scriptural understanding. In support of the hypothesis, the Arian controversy was a replay of events, as these formed part of a philosophical and theological debate, and would determine orthodoxy, being communicated through the synod or council. That became a new dynamic, one of imperial intervention, placing significance upon the essence of the debate and philosophy, despite the marginal role of the emperor who had to dominate in the narrative of the emerging orthodoxy. Young (2012:460) asserts that one cannot

objectively distance the Christological controversies from the 'general maelstrom of personal rivalries, ethical uncertainties and speculative view'. This can well be established as a potential ploy to unite the 'fractionated' Roman church under a single monepiscopate undergirded by a 'monarchian theology' (Young 2012:460). Whilst certain bishops like Zephyrinus and Callistus (cf. Young 2012:458) were sympathetic towards the monarchian views, the reaction of Tertullian and Hippolytus endeavoured for orthodoxy, engulfing a desire for episcopal unity. *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, a work chronicling events relating to the matter, implied a revision of the narrative as a war of bishops.

Dynamism was the other opposite extreme, teaching that 'the *Logos* is God's outward-directed force and wisdom, a force identical with himself and without a proper personality' (Roldanus 2006:73). This *dynamis* (power or force) had been revealed in the persons of many heroes in salvation history, but markedly in Christ due to his very pure character and harmony with God. This view, in opposition to the Sabellianism, would be rendered as 'Christology from below' (Roldanus 2006:73): The man, Jesus, was approved through the actions in his life, whilst the 'Spirit of virtue' was in him and it used him. Also linked to this understanding were the adoptionist views postulating that Jesus has progressively been accepted as he grew in pleasing the Father. A major drawback to this doctrine was how it would distinguish Jesus from other biblical heroes such as Elijah and Moses. In AD 268 Paul of Samosata, a proponent of this view, was condemned by an Antiochene synod, and so it was declared unorthodox (Roldanus 2006:73).

Roldanus (2006:73) notes that, although these doctrines were refused and cast out as unorthodox, they remained as an ideological framework for many when relating to issues of Christology or Trinitarian debates on the nature of Jesus and his hierarchical relationship with the Father. The only difference is that, as they resurfaced, they simply rephrased the same thing. This was a middle phase in the Christological debate that offered the idea of *subordination* pertaining to the hierarchical relationship between God the Father and the Son (Roldanus 2006:74).

These ideas made it into the fourth century, although in a slightly different form, and they posed a challenge to the unification of the Empire. At that stage ecumenical

councils, unlike local synods, would strive to avoid the resurgence of these ideas that were divisive to the religion, and the emperor would guarantee that. This was made possible because of the ecumenical/universal nature of the synods which, unlike the local synods that once handled these affairs, an entrenched catholic superstructure with a monarchical episcopate backed by the emperor would then make a decision about a heresy. This would be a desirable outcome for both parties (the emperor and the ecclesiastical hierarchy) as it would consolidate the power of both the emperor and the bishop, because of the structure of the church, its bishopric, and imperial patronage. The impact of Hellenism and philosophy on the councils and their decisions is also a notable factor, attached to the nature of their arguments.

#### **6.3.2.5 Hellenistic syncretism**

As argued in the study, the resurgence of Hellenistic philosophy as a source to the debate that emanated at that point in the Christian era, is proof of its significance as a factor or catalyst in the shaping of orthodoxy. That has more worth than the political move by the emperor.

In a treatise on monotheism and Christology, Young (2012:466) stated that Origen sparked the Christological debate into existence. He placed Origen on the same line as apologists such as Justin Martyr, Hippolytus, and Tertullian, and to further development of the *Logos* theology. Though Origen had a somewhat unique approach that emphasized the substance of the Deity, this is what was inherited by many in the East who, in line with this thinking, formulated an ontological hierarchy, whilst discrediting elements of modalist monarchianism. The Arian controversy was a resurgence of these unresolved consequences (cf. Young 2012:467).

Christianity was enduring these ideological divisions which, though biblical, were strongly philosophical and corresponding to the self-defining trajectory. There was also the existence of a cultic tendency (cf. Young 2012), and how certain views would elbow out others. According to Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 7.27-30; Schaff 1885k:501-508), proleptic events transpired during the reign of Aurelian (270-275), after a fall-out between Dionysius of Rome and Paul of Samosata, as the bishop of Antioch was ultimately being confronted with Paul's Christology from below (Young 2012:467). After a series

of councils with the final significant one in AD 268, there was consensus and action was taken against the heretical Paul.

Though being excommunicated, he remained obstinate, refusing to surrender the church building to his replacement. The reaction by Dionysius is most significant, as the church appealed to the emperor who, though pagan, was tolerant of Christians (*Hist Eccl* 7.27-30; Schaff 1885k:501-508). In turn the emperor reinforced the decision of the council, which was a prelude to the change that would be ushered in by Constantine. As a completing agent to the orthodox self-definition of Christianity, imperial reinforcement of councils and canon law would universalize episcopal/ecclesiastical politics.

Young (2012:468) asserts that this was a continuation of the process of Hellenistic enculturation of Christianity, where 'controversy drove the impulse to move from the rhetoric of devotion and confession to that of definition and doctrine'. This attempt to be theologically correct, distinguished the church as a social organization, as this 'cult' had teachings which determined the inclusion or exclusion of adherents, which was a unique feature in the ancient world. The church emerged in that case as a 'philosophical school'. Despite diversities, there was a drive towards unity which would entail the exclusion of those ideas deemed deviant from the norm (Young 2012:469).

In view of that, the role of the emperor came as a finishing touch to an eventful scenario. Origen had views akin to middle-Platonic and Platonic thinking, since he deemed Jesus to be the intermediary, the first 'step down' from the uniquely highest being to the plurality of other beings (Roldanus 2006:75). Correspondingly in Platonism, the cosmological hierarchy was made up of the high spiritual being at the top, and would descend to the lower of the rest of creation (Lyman 1993).

In Origen's ideology, as in Platonism, the emphasis is on the idea of emanation or generation, as he postulated that Christ was the second God, though not in numbers. Origen's views would not undo monotheism, but would show a unique relationship between Christ and the Father, as he insisted that Christ was distinct from God the Father. This was a subordinationist Christology, which was harmonious to contemporary Platonic views on the cosmos and humanity (Roldanus 2006:74). The

idea of a hierarchical and emanating relationship between the Being/God and his cosmos came into the spotlight of enquiry in both philosophy and theology (Roldanus 2006:74). In relation to theology, Arius considered the entailed possibilities that would stem from this idea (Roldanus 2006:74).

Young concurs with Roldanus that the thoughts of Origen became the source for the many views on Christology that would emanate (Young 2012:465). However, that he incited the idea of emanation of the Son from the Father, was an accusation that betrayed his balance between Christology and monotheism. In a blend of middle-Platonism and Scripture he conceptualized a single *Logos* constituting a plurality of roles (Young 2012:464) – a ‘distinct hypostasis’ (*De Princip* 1.2; Schaff 1885d:434), the one mediator. In *Against Celsus* 8.12 (Schaff 1885d:1141), Origen cited Scripture that inferred the complex unity of the Father and the Son (Jn 14:9; Heb 1:3; Col 1:13). Although Hippolytus and Tertullian refined this view later on, the background of the Christological debate remained a convergence of Scripture and philosophy, entangling within it the emerging structure of episcopal polity. Against the background of the official position of the church as cited above, the divergent view held by Arius are discussed below.

#### **6.3.2.6 The Christology of Arius**

As the Arian controversy was the cause for the first ecumenical council, a look will be taken at his ideology. According to Roldanus, Arius was a Libyan who lived between AD 256 and 338, and a priest in Alexandria at Baucalis (Roldanus 2006:74). Taking advantage of the influence being a metropolitan presbyter, Arius had a large following, perhaps owing to the opinions he advanced (cf. *Hist* 1.5; Schaff 1885m:20).

Arius’ teachings clearly indicate a Platonic link, which could also determine his popularity amongst the masses. First, he had adopted his ideas from middle-Platonism, where he would argue for a theology of negation. He taught that God was completely transcendent – the ultimate reality about God was that of his uniqueness from the rest of creation. From a Scriptural point of view, Arius argued that God alone was ‘unbegun’, with the implications pertaining to his infinity and immutability (Arius *Thalia*; Williams 2001:98-116); Roldanus 2006:75). In light of this frame of mind, enquiry would arise as to the ontology of the *Logos* or Christ, with the two options

posing challenges: Philosophically, if Christ was deemed divine without beginning this would defy the philosophical understanding of the existence of one principle that is unique from the rest, whereas saying that Jesus was created, would defy the biblical message of Christ's divine Son-ship (VC 2.69.1; Schaff 1885k:781). At the heart of this controversy was a battle of philosophy, which appeared in the garb of theology. The deviance of Arius' point of view in this case appears to be much determined by his opponents.

Second, Roldanus (2006:75) notes how a literary exegesis also influenced Arius' views. Looking at Hebrews 3:1-2, for example, Arius would see Christ who was a son and servant of God, who was also not entitled to certain knowledge, and would at times struggle to do God's will (cf. Jn 12:27-28). This can be ascribed to his Antiochene training at the school of Lucian in AD 280 where he learned literal exegesis. Scholars have debated as to the cause of the view of Christ by Arius in relation to salvation or a physical make-up of the universe (cf. Gregg & Groh 1981:21,31).

Ferguson (2005:24) argues that a revisionist reading of Eusebius takes into account that the Arian controversy was a conflict of schools – those of Lucian and Origen. Whereas Eusebius was himself of the school of Origen in Caesarea, his account emphasized the viewpoint in harmony with his beliefs. The partial exclusion of Methodius of Olympus is attributed to his 'animosity' towards Origen. Information concerning Methodius could be derived from Epiphanius of Salamis (*Pan Haer* 62.14-64.19; Williams 2009:130-134; Ferguson 2005:24). For Ferguson the Eusebian account shows a clash of ideologies, which prevailed throughout the persecution era, and resulted in the consolidation of episcopal powers by some elements. Here it is clear that the emerging ecclesiastical polity was resurging in the controversy, despite the political side of the Arian controversy. The schism establishes how there were political as well as ideological differences amongst the clergyman, and this would dictate the involvement of the emperor.

According to Arius' *Thalia*, Christ was the *Logos* (Word) of God in the flesh. This *Logos* was the force in Christ, it was a creature and not a regular soul. The *Logos* also was the first and perfect creature of God, to be the thinking and willing force in Christ. This, amongst other things, was interpreted as 'there was a time when he did not exist'

(Roldanus 2006:75). Arius argued that the title 'Son of God' was mere a consequence of his loyalty to God, and not necessarily likeness to divinity. This leaves us with a Christ who was not fully God, but also not completely human – 'more than we' yet 'one with us' (Roldanus 2006:75).

Politically Arius' view gained a lot of ground throughout social strata. This message was a crowd-puller for several reasons, which is also the possible reason for its great significance at the defining moment of imperial intervention in the church and ecumenical councils. From bishops to people on the street, a created servant of God, creating and redeeming humanity and thereby affirming monotheism was very logical. For others the emphatic urge upon the human will to live purely was more attractive, as Christ was a human who exercised the *Logos*' will unto divine sonship (Roldanus 2006:75). To pagans the Platonic cosmic structure was familiar, whilst a sonship attained because of loyalty to the divine, resonated with the Greek myths of Persius, Hercules, and Odyssey.

Arius' view saw a convergence of believers. It was a sway in public opinion within the prominence which Christianity was gaining under the patronage of Constantine. The nature of the debates and the influence of Arius established that the consequential response of the emperor to the controversy would be a theological political solution. There was going to be need for recommending and enforcing the official position through the council, whilst embracing some diplomatic inclusiveness. This would be necessitated by the influence of Arius' ideas and the well-entrenched ideologies against them.

The Donatist controversy had proven that a firm hand alone could not quell well-established and popular viewpoints in Christianity. Therefore, to avoid an intransigent deviant group/schism, the settlement had to be firm in support of the orthodox structures, but the actions had to be taken in line with the 'heretics'/'schismatics'.

#### **6.3.2.7 Episcopacy, theology and politics**

There was an intricate relationship between ecclesiastical politics and the Arian controversy. Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria, came with a view which was directly in conflict with Arius, despite the fact that both priest and bishop were heavily indebted



to Origen in their views. Alexander concluded that Christ was in the creative and not created domain, that God was unbegotten, whilst his Son was begotten of him. Alexander has moved from *agenetos* (unbegun) to *agennetos* (unbegotten), suggesting that there was never a time when the Son was not, since he created time (cf. Roldanus 2006:77). Alexander's view had notable elements of dualism in it. As bishop, he excommunicated Arius and two bishops from Cyrene – Arius' home area. The conflict gained a political face when Arius began to write letters appealing to other bishops, in particular Eusebius (the bishop of Nicomedia with whom Arius had attended the Lucian school in Antioch; cf. *Hist Ecclest* 1.15; Schaff 1885m:45), in protest against his excommunication. He also appealed to Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, who was reputable for his influence. After the intervention of Eusebius of Nicomedia, Alexander wrote to all eastern bishops, protesting the violation of his see by the meddlesome Eusebius. According to the letter to Alexander, the bishop of Byzantine, Alexander insisted that Arius and his sympathizers were 'splitting the seamless robe of Christ that even the soldiers had dared not divide' (Behr 2004:64), by this inferring how the actions of Arius were doing harm to the Alexandrian church.

The Nicene Council would be a fight amongst bishops, as each side would bid for their view to be backed by both tradition and creed, and by the emperor. The creed resultant from the council has much in common with Eusebius' confession (Eusebius himself a moderate follower of Origen's emanatory philosophy), as well as the counter-actions by the emperor to reverse the actions of the synod of Antioch in early AD 325 (Vermes 2012:228).

The entanglement of the emperor in episcopal ecumenical matters, specifically at this council, was clear. The manner in which bishops sought imperial affirmation for their position, also showed how they were entangled in politics. The philosophical nature of theological thought in this instance corresponded to the role of the synods and established how this was but a continuation of the cultic process in the limelight of the emerging superstructure cushioned by the imperial patronage.

#### **6.3.2.8 The council and its implications**

Renowned for its conceptual role, the Nicene Council would be the ecumenical synod setting the standards for establishing unity and orthodoxy in the church. It would

establish the place of theological debate which, according to some scholars, was primarily philosophical, alongside the compromise for unity and the role of the emperor in striking this balance between politics and Hellenism. This would be a consummation in the process that saw the emergence of a new form of conciliar episcopal governance of the church, which would at times be urged by the monarchs themselves upon the bishopric and later possibly *vice versa*.

Roldanus (2006:79) argues that the council was Constantine's method of bringing about concord amongst the bishops, as they were the thought leaders, over against the influential laity and lower clergy such as the presbyter, Arius. The issue, however, only applied to the eastern church of the Empire, although later it spread throughout Christendom. Pope Sylvester of Rome, for example, attended the council, although it had an eastern agenda (Vermes 2012:229). Though the emperor summoned a number of 1,800 bishops, only 300 attended – according to Sozomen (*Hist Ecclest* 1.17; Schaff 1885m:359) there were 320 attendees. The role of the emperor was felt in the hospitable invite he had sent by hand from Hosius of Cordova, the bishop of Spain (*Hist* 1.7; Schaff 1885m:24-26; Behr 2004:65).

The ferrying was at the emperor's cost and the luxurious convention centre was his palace. Upon the reception of the bishops and during the council, the emperor showed much respect for those that had been persecuted (VC 3.10; Schaff 1885k:789; cf. Leithart 2010). In every manner the conduct of the emperor heralded a new era for church and state as noted by Eusebius, that as liberator of the church the emperor was no longer the tyrant, but Moses and Christ's 13<sup>th</sup> apostle (VC 2.28.2; Schaff 1885k:766).

Concord had to be reached at all cost. As honorary chairman who would not be lost in the philosophical dilemma (cf. Roldanus 2006:80; Leithart 2010), the emperor would only interpose for the sake of unity. Observing as he was, through the multiple nuanced opinions and views, Constantine the shrewd politician would strive to note and entrench the majority of orthodoxy, and then force the rest to fall in with these (VC 3.4; Schaff 1885k:786). In that case favour with the emperor and reputable scholarship would be more than an advantage to entrench one's view.

### **6.3.2.9 Possible deductions**

The Nicene creed, which became the formulated solution of the council, was the Caesarean faith as championed by the bishop Eusebius, who also happened to have had the recently mentioned credentials, an air with the emperor, and a reputable scholarship. This in a way paints the episcopal ecumenical yet political picture in Nicaea, where the political element as a catalyst of orthodoxy would cement the birth of episcopal polity in orthodoxy. Amazing enough, Eusebius first had to be formalized, as he was provisionally excommunicated by the Antiochene council to accord him time to reflect (Behr 2004:67). The political undertones for Nicaea are apparent, as the venue, for example, was not Ancyra, where the influential bishop, Marcellus of Ancyra would wield influence, but Nicaea, that was near Nicomedia, where the emperor could be both a participant and an observer (c.f Behr 2004). This could also be argued from a point of ease and convenience, given the accessibility of Nicaea, even for the western bishops, complemented by a more favourable climate. Yet the emperor took control of the situation to ensure the intended outcome. Drake (2006:125) postulates that the avoidance of Ancyra was an evasion of its bishop, Marcellus, who was much against Arianism and was going to be very influential as a presiding bishop, just as Miltiades in Rome in AD 313, as the emperor had encountered him short before. With all these actions, the emperor was making a statement about the path orthodox Christianity was to take under him.

### **6.3.2.10 Philosophical turbulence and a binding creed**

The significance of the Nicene Council in AD 325 in this study also lies in the nature of the controversy it sought to address. The nature of Christ as debated between the protagonists, Arius and Alexander, was more an issue about questions related to the philosophical understanding of the nature of Christ. An excerpt from the Arian point of view is given here:

The Father...is the source of all things. Thus there are three subsisting realities [*hypostaseis*]. And God, being the cause of all that happens, is absolutely alone without beginning; but the Son begotten...and created [*ktistheis*] and founded before the ages, was not in existence before his generation, but was begotten...before all things, and he alone came into existence [*hypeste*] from the Father (Leithart 2010:166).

This quote shows the technicality of the theological debate as Constantine himself observed, yet he urged concord in the spirit of Christian brotherhood. The emperor was known for his endeavours to quell debate and rather strike a compromise between the bishops. The council of Nicaea, however, did not settle the matter as it is evidenced by later councils that sought to address the same agenda, such as the one in AD 327 (Leithart 2010:167). Constantine is quoted by Eusebius to say:

The cause of your difference has not been any of the leading doctrines or precepts of the Divine law, nor has any new heresy respecting the worship of God arisen among you. You are in truth of one and the same judgement: you may therefore well join in communion and fellowship...Do ye both exhibit an equal degree of forbearance (VC 2.64-72; Schaff 1885k:779-783).

Leithart deduces from this that the emperor's push and drive for unity seemingly engulfed any constructive debate. As it appears, the object would be doctrinal unity rather than orthodoxy, but here orthodoxy is seemingly defined by an unanimous accent, rather than authenticity of teaching. The blend of philosophy is also evident in this case.

As one of the significant triumphs of the council was the coinage of the term *homoousios* (same substance) to define the relation between Christ and his Father, ironically this term was developed by Arius in a bid to show the unorthodoxy of the Alexandrian point of view. Edwards (2012:562), however, asserts that if the account of Philostorgius is to be taken into consideration (cf. *Hist Eccles* 1.7; Pearse 2002:11), the term *homoousios* can be ascribed to Alexander and Ossius. There is even a possibility (at the account of Eusebius) that Constantine was the one who enjoined the *homoousios* concept (Edwards 2012:563). This is possible due to the emperor's *logos prophorikos* (uttered) derivant from *logos endiathetos* (innate word) (*De Decret Nic Syn*; *Orat Const* 9; Schaff 1885p:359-360). As many Greeks, according to Edwards (2012:563), had a resentment for that new invention, it could only be an inducement of the emperor.

Behr (2004:157), concurring with Edwards, observes that the term 'consubstantial' (*homoousios*) had not been significantly used in theological narratives, and was often used without a precise prescriptive meaning. Athanasius' report suggests that the use

of the term was made inevitable, because of the impossibility to compose a creed strictly using biblical terminology (Behr 2004:157). The multi-defining nature of the term only made it more suitable for the imperial endeavour for unity, after the council and even Athanasius did not use the term for several decades (Behr 2004:157).

In light of these observations by Behr and Edwards, a safe conclusion can be made regarding the emphatic influence of politics at this point. The fact that there was a general disgruntlement to the creed itself, implies that this accenture could possibly have been only attempts to survive. As noted by Leithart (2010:183), the bishops present at Nicaea who were not reprehensive of the intransigent and critical clique, possibly did not live beyond the persecution, because of their strict, uncompromising stance. Although some scholars assert that the bishops had totally lost voice after the council, it is an overstatement, as Athanasius for example was critical of the emperor and his successor for meddling in church affairs (Leithart 2010:170). The success of the council was inevitable, with 198 bishops against two in favour of it (cf. Leithart 2010:170).

The Nicene creed was formulated as the keynote for Christological orthodoxy, though this would be insufficient, as proved by the recurrence and re-emergence of the Christological controversies. The creed was formulated as indication of what was to be believed concerning the Son, but also contained anathemas to it. In this case the implication would be that those found on the divergent side of the anathemas, would fall under the heavy hand of the Lord and his servant, the emperor (Millar 1977:598). The anathema stated:

But those who say, 'there was a time when he did not exist', and 'before being begotten he did not exist', and 'that he came into being from non-existence', or who allege that 'the Son of God is another hypostasis or ousia, or alterable or changeable', these the Catholic and apostolic church declares anathema (Vermes 2012:232).

An opposition to the creed would be an opposition to peace. Therefore, everybody who diverted from the creed, such as the two Libyan bishops, Secundus of Ptolemais and Theonas of Marmarica, were deposed for being obstinate. As Arius signed the creed with a mumbling protest, it saw him temporarily implicated by being exiled to

Illyria (Behr 2004:68). The signing process, according to Barnes (2011:122; cf. *Hist Eccles* 1.9a), was supervised by the *magister officiorum* (official), a government official in the procedure where the creed would be carried around for all to sign. This shows how the controversy had become a matter of both state and ecclesiastical affairs, though this did not determine the outcome which formed part of ecclesiastical politics. Nicaea's centrality as a convergence of all three catalysts remains key, however, especially because it consolidated the anti-Semitic trajectory that was precipitated by the schism and was established earlier by Marcionite thinking.

#### **6.3.2.11 Anti-Semitism and the ecumenical agenda**

In this section the discussion takes a look at how the schism between the Jews and Christians contributed to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy. Coupled with the intricacy of the political nature of Nicaea, there is also an anti-Semitic agenda. Behr (2004:22) argues that the complexity of the Nicene narrative inclines toward a direction that portrays Nicaea as a political and cultural issue, rather than completely a theological narrative. The fact that Arius was the archetype heretic and originator of confusion, fails to tally with the massive influence he garnered in Syria and Asia Minor. According to Behr (2004:22), 'Arius must have stood for some aspect of traditional Christianity'. Behr's assessment is that Arius was simply a catalyst to a more greater issue, which was the diversity of theological understanding in the early church, and which was unfortunately under attack after Nicaea. This analysis resonates with the view of Roldanus about Arius, being derived from the sway and popularity of his ideas. This emphasizes how the urge for uniformity would sweep away diversity as deviance, although the orthodoxy retained similar elements. This analysis was the cause of the consolidation of a Marcionite anti-Semitic ideology, as seen in certain edicts of Nicaea, despite the fact that Marcion was regarded to be extremely radical.

It becomes clear that Nicaea was a convergence of the three factors under study – Hellenism, schism, and politics. Nickelsburg (2003) has established that Marcion's ideas of anti-Semitism were conceived as an anti-Semitic trajectory in the Christian church. There was legislation at Nicaea that outlawed the celebration of Easter, which customarily coincided with the Jewish Passover on 14 Nisan (cf. *Hist Eccl* 5.23.2-3; Schaff 1885k:275). Added to this, the liturgical exercises were to be standardized in Africa, Egypt, Libya, Greece, Asia and Pontica (VC 3.18.3; Schaff 1885k:793). The

practice of the forty days of lent during Easter, formerly a western practice, was imposed upon all (Barnes 2011:125). The anti-Semitism attached to the prohibition of keeping Easter simultaneously with the Passover, further entrenches how the self-defining process, bracketed in the imperial connotations, would continually sever ties from Judaic origins.

According to the emperor, the Jews were guilty of 'deicide' (murder of God) (cf. VC 3.18.2-4; 19.1; Schaff 1885k:793, 794): 'It's unworthy to accomplish that most holy festival following the custom of the Jews, who have sullied their hands with a lawless crime are predictably polluted and spiritually blind' (Barnes 2011:124). This idea of ancestral guilt, as seen in Matthew 27:23, became deeply entrenched in the theological ideology, as seen in Tertullian's works. In *On Prayer* 14 (Schaff 1885c:276-277), Tertullian taunted the Jews as eternally unclean, even if they wash daily – the stain of prophetic martyrs' blood and that of Jesus was an irremovable stain upon them (Barnes 2011:125). This further emphasizes how Nicaea was a consolidation of the events that transpired during the tripartite phase of the catalysts (schism, Hellenism, and imperial intervention as politics). Added to this was the entrenchment of a certain ideology attributed to the cultic process and the emerging episcopal hierarchy that implied ecclesiastical politics. This formula has conceived the post-Nicene era with its corresponding orthodoxy.

#### **6.3.2.12 Nicene orthodoxy as post AD 325 Christianity**

From the above it is clear that Nicaea became the representation of the type of Christianity emerging after AD 325 – a religion that was enhanced by imperial favour and meddling, but also syncretistic and marred by ecclesiastical polity. These ecclesiastical polities became substantial enough to influence a theological opinion with much of it being derived from philosophy. This religion would superimpose standards and practices, endeavouring to cement a unity that was not accommodating of significant diversity. It was very self-defining and also anti-Semitic, which was perhaps the reason why the schism could be inferred as the first stage, inciting the trajectory from which ecumenical orthodoxy, as defined by Nicaea, emerged. The emergence of this era also implied a drastic change in church-imperial relations, as certain scholars are marking it as the significant Constantinian turn. Despite the

argument for philosophy and ecclesiastical politics as significant factors, the change in imperial policy towards Christianity still remains a substantial element.

#### **6.4 The Constantinian turn**

In this section the discussion covers the role that imperial intervention played in the formation and establishment of ecumenical orthodoxy. Despite the achievements of the council, it would be incorrect to envisage the triumph of Christological orthodoxy and the sweeping role of an emperor, as later councils reconvened such as in AD 327 to show that the matter was far from being settled. Leithart (2010) asserts that the emperor did not completely formulate the final creed as claimed by early scholarship. More recent scholars rather refer to an influential but circumspect role. This view, however, is not totally supported by Behr (2004) and Edwards (2012), though they are also hinting on the insufficiency and lack of unanimity in acceptance of the creed, but have established the emphatic role of a unifying emperor on the usage of terminology. Leithart (2010:171) observes how 'it was only the first round of a theological, political and interestingly personal controversy'. His idea is that it began the age of 'council theology' or rather ecumenical orthodoxy, where councils received an important role in the determination of practice in faith.

Though Nicaea was significant, it symbolised the beginning of a new relationship between the church and state, the marriage between piety and power. It seemingly became the origin of Constantinianism, which was a new way of relation between the emperor and the Christian church, where the emperor became the guardian of orthodoxy (Reuver 1996:32). Although this was the birth of imperial Christianity, the argument of this research is that this form of Christianity was an orthodoxy, consolidated by imperial powers and in no way a result of this era alone. A religion that has transcended cultures from charisma to philosophical dogma, is typical of the Christianity that was guarded by the emperor – one that already had structures capable of embracing and engulfing all the pagan rites and forms in a syncretistic way.

##### **6.4.1 Imperial polity or just politics?**

The question that needs to be answered here is, Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy, or could there be other influences? Leithart (2010:177) ventures a re-defining view of how



much influence imperial politics had on the Christian movement. In this context Leithart queries the view of Yoder who was influential in Constantinian scholarship. As observed by Ferguson (2005:24), there is a tendency between many scholars to write the history of Christianity as a theological narrative without regarding the historical evidence. This is the reason why a continuous review of primary sources and further evidence have always influenced a revisionist view of many 'established standpoints'.

Leithart (2010:177) poses a couple of questions: 'Did the church of the fourth century allow itself to be absorbed into the machinery of power? Did bishops...lose their critical prophetic edge?' The questions are posed within the context of Constantine who did not call himself 'bishop of bishops', although his son, Constantius II did it. Ferguson (2005:22-24) also argued that Eusebius has mostly been misinterpreted, being alluded to as 'the great publicist of the first Christian emperor...political theologian...and ceasaropapist' (Hollerich 1990:309). Citing Barnes (1981:266), Leithart (2010:179) argues that Eusebius was not a courtier, as he had little contact with the emperor. The fact that he had a good biography and panegyric of the emperor has influenced certain scholars, although his works consisted of apologetics and biblical works.

Concerning his ideology, even after Nicaea, Eusebius called the church *theosebes politeuma* (godly polity), governed by the episcopate rather than the emperor. Eusebius interpreted Isaiah 11:6 picturing (mostly) wild animals being led by a boy, by claiming that the boy represented the clergy, whilst the animals were the imperial officials (Leithart 2010:179). For Eusebius the emperor was a quasi-bishop and in no way inclined towards the *episcopus episcoporum* (bishop of bishops notion) practised by Constantius (Leithart 2010:180). In light of the review that was made on the intransigent nature of African Christianity, especially with reference to the Donatist controversy, it would appear logical to infer a correspondence between theological divergence and political resistance. Such a picture was regarded as norm by certain scholars, according to Leithart (2010:181; cf. Yoder 2002:223), yet it was the anti-Arian Athanasius who resisted the emperor at a later stage of his career. Citing Sider (2004:154) and Dagron (2003:129), Leithart (2010:182-183), in similar fashion to Roldanus (2006), argues that much of what has been termed as Eusebius' obsession with imperial polity, was simply the euphoria that was prevalent in the fourth century Christianity, as there was a change in political fortunes, resulting in favour of an

emperor where there was hostility, and where partial tolerance was naturally going to shock every Christian (Collier 2013:157). The preceding observation is affirmed in Cavanaugh's review of Leithart's book (Cavanaugh 2013:85).

These views make sense against the background of how Barnes (2011) asserts the intricate polity of ecclesiastics, as already discussed. The Christian polity was influenced by all the dynamics affecting Christianity in the self-defining process, resulting in the monarchical episcopate. The church, according to Leithart, was a dynamic unknown to Rome, and there was no blueprint as to the relation of the emperor to the church (cf. Brent 2009) – therefore the church became a state within a state. The fact that these dynamics were prevalent before Constantine, implied that the challenge was mutual.

Within the Stoic ideology of the church that idealized martyrdom as a triumph, the new scenario simply meant vindication, causing the Empire to make concessions, and not the Christians (cf. Leithart 2010:183). The fact that the bishops were reduced to mere extensions of the imperial political circle (cf. Barnes 2011), is an overstatement, as there remains much evidence that they were still critical and autonomous. In fact, beyond Constantine, the role and figure of the emperor was demystified in many respects (Leithart 2010:185). Athanasius became very critical of imperial influence as seen in his protests. His correspondence with Basil of Caesarea showed their resentment of a governor whom they deemed a persecutor. Basil actually promised action by publicizing the deeds of the wicked governor, who was an imperial functionary (*Epist* 61; Schaff 1885q:479; Leithart 2010:185). The reburial of Constantine at a distance away from the 'apostles' resonated with the emerging ideology as concluded by Chrysostom. The imperial burial would be significant of the role of the emperor in the church – that of a doorkeeper rather than 'an apostle' (Leithart 2010:185).

If the claim to apostolic succession in the formation of a monarchical episcopate and self-defining emergence of orthodoxy is anything to go by, it became apparent that the church was the domain of the bishops, and not the emperor. Constantine, though, would uniquely be distinguished as saint, because of his spiritual experiences (the visions and personal charisma), something which would not be expected from later

emperors (Leithart 2010:185). The emperors would not necessarily reign during conciliar politics, as established by Roldanus (2006:40) – this seemingly ended with Constantine.

Dagron (2003:296-297) has listed emperors who distanced themselves from conciliar affairs, of which a few examples are given: Theodosius did not participate in the council of Ephesus, but has rather sent his representative, Candidianus, with hedging instructions. Constantine IV urged the pope to resolve the Monothelite controversy, affirming his hands-off policy with bishops. The correspondence of Ossius of Corduba and Hilary of Poitiers with Constantius shows how the bishops were asserting their role autonomously, denying contaminating influence of the emperor. Hilary's admonitions were rather candid and blunt, comparing Constantius to pagan persecutors: 'To thee, o Constantius, do I proclaim what I would have uttered before Nero...Decius and Maximin' ( Leithart 2010:187; Wickham 1997:104-107).

This sentiment was probably responsible for the principle of the two forces, as deduced in Gelasius' letter to Anastasius, provoked possibly by imperial intrusion in ecclesiastical matters. Gelasius (*Letter of Gelasius to Anastasius Augustus* PL 59:41-47; Robinson 1905:72-73) emphasized that the domain was now subject to two influences – the sacred authority (*auctoritas*) and the royal imperial power (*potestas*) (Drake 2006:413). This was no delusional power claimed by the episcopate. Ambrose (*Ep* 40.11; Schaff 1885r:643) hinted that the episcopate held leverage against the emperor in the influence of public opinion. At that stage it was more real, given the place of Christianity in the Empire. Theodosius, for example, was warned not to make a martyr out of the see of Callinicum, otherwise the episcopate and clergy in general would not be responsible for the negative public sentiment, especially in the volatile urban areas (cf. Drake 2006:414). This fact coheres with the eminent primacy of the metropolitan sees, as the Empire had to make concessions with the church, which housed an autonomously influential polity.

Leithart cites Williams (2001:236-237), stating that the post-Nicene years proved that an imperially-backed orthodoxy was not the solution for Christianity. It can be added that this orthodoxy could also not ensure momentum and flow of the self-defining process of Christianity. A *deus ex machina* (god from the machine) on the imperial

throne would not be sufficient to contain the philosophical self-defining turbulence that had brewed an emerging polity, assertive of their dogmatic authority. Leithart (2010:187) also has the opinion that the historic pendulum did not have an accurate direction.

Politics was a very dominant factor in the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy, though not of itself, because of the self-defining process originating from the anti-Semitic schism, the ideologizing of Christianity as a philosophy, and the heresies that appeared. However, the political factor went beyond the imperial intervention, as it appears that ecclesiastical polity as a function of the emerging episcopate was actually more significant. Furthermore, a convergence of the two in conciliar politics was the direct cause of ecumenical orthodoxy.

#### **6.4.2 Constantine, the convergence of philosophy and politics**

Brent (2009:278-284) observes that metaphysics and ideology converged in the Christian world. He argues that according to Monarchianism – the doctrine viewing that a monarchical trinity was ‘reflected in an Episcopal monarchy’ – the Trinitarian monarchy would be typologically illustrated through ‘presbyter bishops, who equal in power, dignity and majesty, would secure political unity on the basis of mutual consent, regard’ (Brent 2009:278) – this was Callistus’ theology. Evidence for success of this philosophy is, for example, the regnal dates assigned for popes beginning with Pontian. According to Brent (2009:278), Constantine, who retained the *Pontifex Maximus* title, styled himself to be a universal bishop of the world without the church: ‘Christian sacerdotal power and imperial political power was *united*’. Constantine, who saw the vision of Christ Apollo, and thereby received the command *in hoc signo vinci*, would be the earthly incarnation of the *Sol Invictus* (invincible sun). His pagan continuity is attested to the coinage that was minted as late as AD 328. However, though failing to attain the status of *Pontifex Maximus*, the Nicene formula of the *Logos* would, as other metaphysical and theological ideologies converge, make Constantine the parallel of the *Logos* as the thirteenth apostle of Christ, and also as the Lord’s servant. The order of the Empire would be the divine cosmic order (*Orat Const* 2.1, 5; Schaff 1885k:884).

The three factors are blended together in this case, as there could be an intersection of the schismatic Hellenistic elements with imperial politics. Furthermore, the ideology was robust, to the extent of victimizing the emperor who had turned to the Christian worldview, and not the ancient traditional religions of Rome. Brent (2009:286) suggests that the episcopacy was an iron wall to the emperor. Although he was fully dominating Christianity, he could only control Christianity through the bishops (and not without them) by empowering them. This is an important element in the research, as it appears to have been a link between the three phases of the schism, Hellenisation, and acculturation to imperial patronage. It is clear that Nicaea gained an emerging leadership throughout the centuries, that oversaw the cultic process and put in place a superstructure that would be used by the emperor to universalize the new religion.

## 6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has reflected on the role that imperial intervention played in the formation and establishment of ecumenical orthodoxy. The intersection amidst the turbulent convergence of factors was the Constantinian peace that changed the church-state relations. The liberation themes of Constantine pointed to a new dawn for Christianity. As *liberator urbis* and *liberator ecclesiae* – liberator of the city and the church – Constantine was a new phenomenon that the emerging Christianity of councils and philosophy had to adjust to (Leithart 2010; Van Dam 2011). The fact that the emperor had chosen not to persecute the bishops, but ally himself to them, made his role inevitable with regards to ecclesiastical unity (Roldanus 2006). The fissures in the African church, as resurgent in the Donatist controversy, were unpalatable, and the Arles synod would show how much of the imperial arm would be necessary. Yet the resilient and stubborn nature of African Christianity would continually threaten the new-found unity, evidencing the importance of cultural influences over the political arm of the emperor in the establishment of an ecumenical orthodoxy (Barnes 2011).

Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy, or could there be other influences? Nicaea would be the zenith of the political ecclesiastical union, although the complex nature of the arguments itself shows the influence of philosophy on this emerging orthodoxy (Behr 2004). It appears that the emperor had a very active role, though an oversimplification would ignore the influential bishops and the intransigent African narrative as evidence

against the primacy of imperial intervention in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy. The observation concerning the primacy and eminent role of the bishops and the fact that councils were simply looked at in an implicative manner, necessitates the following chapter. Chapter 7 analyses the interaction of the three factors – of how politics should also include ecclesiastical politics – and takes a closer look at the councils.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explore the three factors in the study in relation to how they caused the emergence of a conciliar or rather ecumenical orthodoxy. Chapter 6 discusses the existence and development of councils in Christianity, but does not explicitly establish their origins – this is done in Chapter 7. There was already reference to the primacy of ecclesiastical polities which was not such an explicit reference to imperial intervention as politics. However, ecclesiastical polities are elementary to any substantial conclusion as noted in the preceding chapter. These factors have contributed to the development of this section. The proposed solution to the hypothesis and the positioning of the research is influenced strongly by this section.

As the research progressed, the researcher has discovered certain implications in the development of the subject and in relation to the hypothesis. These implications are understood to be subthemes to the investigation, as they indirectly influenced the events leading up to AD 325, whilst some of them were the result of the interaction of the three factors explored in the research. The first element to be explored is the political element to the Arian heresy and the ecumenical council of Nicaea.

#### **7.2 ARIAN POLITIES**

The question being explored in this section concerns the role played by each of the identified influences, and as to which one played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy. The ensuing controversy, and how it embroiled the Roman monarchy within it, poses a complex situation, also synonymous with its derivation from the diverse manifestation of Arianism in different environments, cultures, and situations. Davidson (2005:48) discusses the complexity of the Christian terrain after Constantine, due to the intricacy of the attachment between politics and religion that came about at that stage. Polity itself became entangled in the religious schism and debate, coupled with an episcopal polity with power derived from the actions of the emperor. Davidson (2005:48) notes how ‘rates of conversion and

fidelity...were affected by twists and turns of imperial policy as well as messages proclaimed by bishops'. Even the aftermath of the council posed a somewhat intricate situation. It seems as if Nicaea had canonised an unbiblical and vague principle (cf. Edwards 2012:564). The threats to unity were seemingly handled in what appears as an Arian reaction in the words of Athanasius (*Hist Arian* 1; Schaff 1885p:526).

This is synonymous with the Constantinian political behaviour for the entrenchment of power, it being the justice and hostile side of the Lord's 'thirteenth apostle' (Bardill 2012:392). It appears that the emperor was highly retributive and would ruthlessly crush any threat to a peaceful and long dominion, such as his murder of Licinius and his son, despite their surrender – also the murder of Crispus and Fausta (Lenski 2006). The emperor had to be certain that there would never again be an occasion that would see the former threats resurging, and apparently this was implemented upon Christianity as well. This policy saw an elevation and embrace of those conceding to the uniform unity and corresponding termination of those who held reservation and had before been some of the boldest on the theological divide. Those who would threaten the newly found orthodox position that unified the Empire had to be taken out.

These assertions are evidenced in the following incidences: In AD 328 Eustathius of Antioch, formerly a harsh critic of Arius and Origen, was deposed for traducing Helena, Constantine's mother. The anti-Arian Marcellus of Ancyra was ousted in AD 335 for being a Sabellian (*Hist* 1.23, 35-36; *Hist Arian* 4-5; Schaff 1885p:54, 64-65; Schaff 1885n:540-547; Edwards 2012:565). Eusebius of Nicomedia, an apologist, was promoted to the greater see of Constantinople in AD 338 (*HE* 1.19; Schaff 1885g:85, 86), whilst Arius was endeared to the emperor for a short while. However, the turbulent situation in Alexandria ensued, with followers of Melitius incriminating Athanasius with tyrannical tendencies. Eusebius (*VC* 4.41-48; Schaff 1885k:833-837) implied a sentiment where Athanasius was the cause of his demise, whilst multiple offenses were chronicled by Rufinus and Sozomen (*Histor Eccl* 1.17; *Hist Ecclest* 1.25.12-19; Schaff 1885m:45, 844), amongst them a sacrilege and fornication. There is a great possibility that these events had political connotations, because of the resistance of the Alexandrian church by failing to readmit Arius into communion, and the resentment by the Meletians.



This is further proof of how the orthodoxy, emerging with the ecumenical councils, was both ideological and political – a view of clerical polity appeared inevitably. This deduction implies the complexity of deciding on the major contributor to ecumenical orthodoxy amongst the catalysts – the appearance of a seemingly new dynamic of clerical politics that entangled the emperor being the major consideration. The complexity of the situation can further be attested to by how the controversy later disintegrated into an eastern-against-western agenda as seen in the two great Councils of Antioch and Serdica. The Council of Antioch defined Nicaea in a more eastern fashion, whilst Serdica accorded Rome the ecumenical impetus entitling it to be ‘champion and interpreter of Nicaea’ (Edwards 2006a:566). The ideological division between eastern and western Christianity, already notable at that stage and in the later history up to the schism of AD 1054, could possibly be attributed to the cultural implications of diversity that implied the partial Hellenisation of certain regions. This though, indirectly further argued for the Hellenisation of Christianity through philosophy as the major catalyst to ecumenical orthodoxy. The two councils also evidenced that ecumenical orthodoxy was not a conclusive success, given the impact of enculturation that implied that even this newly found unity would not guarantee homogeneity. This calls for a more informative investigation of the role of the emperor through recognition of the reality of ecclesiastical politics.

### **7.2.1 Constantine in ecclesiastical politics**

The above analysis of the Arian controversy with regards to the political implications calls for a re-examination of the catalyst of imperial involvement. Where does the emperor fall in cognisance of the dynamic of ecclesiastical politics? Barnes (2011:140) argues that, despite the voluminous documentation on Constantine, Eusebius is selective. Barnes asserts in a revisionist attempt concerning the record by Eusebius that the period after the Nicene Council can be termed ‘*the lost years of the Arian controversy*’ [emphasis added]. This conclusion is a reference to the assertion of how the Nicene narrative is an incomplete account because of the bias of Eusebius. Barnes also observes how it has been established that there is a strong political resemblance in the Arian controversy. He looks at the Arian controversy from a vantage point where the two parties were divided by their descentance from the school of Lucian in Antioch. This implies that it was a group of alumni allied against Alexander and his allies.

Other than what has already been established in the consequences of the controversy, Barnes notes the existence of a chasm between the 'two Constantines' – the one derived from primary sources, and the one from the ecclesiastical historians of the 440s and their followers. Socrates, Theodoret and Sozomen portray an orthodox Constantine in many ways. Barnes (2011:141) argues that according to the primary records of the council, it seems that Constantine was (at some stage) sympathetic to Arianism, hence this was not such harsh stance against him despite his mild obstinacy. In line with the polemics of Athanasius, Constantine was very much pro-Arian (Barnes 2011:141). Barnes' views paint a new picture which, according to him, is not new, as the Nicene formula was to a great degree of Constantinian coinage. It was not necessarily a question of orthodoxy, but of the greater majority. The emperor was endeavouring to simply maintain the unity of the growing movement which could in turn promote a peaceful domain. All these considerations pose a further challenge as to the interplay of imperial Christianity (imperial intervention) and of episcopal polities (ecclesiastical politics) in the formation of an ecumenical orthodoxy.

### **7.2.2 Imperial Christianity or episcopal polity?**

The study of the emergence of an ecumenical orthodoxy as has been done so far, has shown the immense dynamics that were at play prior to the establishment of a universal orthodoxy at Nicaea. Clearly Constantine cannot be divorced from the Christian orthodoxy appearing from AD 325. In many ways 'imperial Christianity' is a term merited to describe Christianity at that point and beyond. However, it also appears that there is an alternate narrative to the events, also traceable throughout the centuries, that it originated from Christianity AD 325. This is the development of an ecclesiastical polity that became significant as, at the councils, the emperor simply threw in his imperial weight behind this already present superstructure which, with consolidated power, became another feature of the ecumenical orthodoxy. The researcher wants to emphatically establish the significance of the fact that there was an episcopal as well as an ecumenical development of the conciliar orthodoxy. Therefore, the study will review how councils evolved and how the imperial element became a catalyst for a more political clergy.

### 7.3 COUNCILS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The centrality of the council of Nicaea and the Arles synod is discussed in this section, since councils are an implied and presupposed factor in this study. Hall (2012a:428) who has traced the development of councils within early Christianity, argues that it was controversies that brought about a judicial element to the councils. As already established, during the era of imperial Christianity, councils became a systematic 'consultative judicial and legislative assembly' (Hess 2002:4-20) in which bishops took a seemingly senatorial role. Councils were therefore a consolidation of both ecclesiastical and imperial politics.

This applies as emphatic evidence regarding the appearance of ecumenical councils as an alien element that was factored by the three catalysts (schism, Hellenism, and imperial intervention), since the apostolic church, as shown in the Lukan Gospel had ecclesiastical assemblies which were not authoritative and differed in terms of composure (Ac 1:15-26; 13:1-3). The Jerusalem Council (Ac 15:1-35) churned out a communiqué to Antioch which later became known as 'the apostolic decree', although there were no judicial or legislative connotations in the proceedings and resolutions.

Hall (2012a) argues that these assemblies were primarily congregational and localised, and that they became inter-church at a later stage. One of his primary arguments is that the early Christian roots were those of house churches as composite units. Therefore, there must have been a significant consultation first. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 5.16.10; Schaff 1885k:358), quoting anonymously, attributed the first councils to the intent of curbing a heresy of new prophecy in Phrygia. Edwards (2012:367) confirms the local nature of synods where the resolve would affect the autonomy of other congregations (cf. *Hist Eccl* 5.24.9; Schaff 1885k:377). The basis would be substantiated not only by the main bishops but the whole province's clergy. These further evidences the change in the nature of councils through time as a factor of the self-defining process.

Hall (2012a) also refers to Origen's controversy with Heraclides, and how it ended up becoming a large *synodos* (synod), though according to him, at that stage it cannot be clearly established whom the council composed of. The desire for consensus is seen, for example, where these councils were convened to quell schisms such as when

some clergymen from Arsinoe debated the authenticity and interpretation of the Apocalypse of John (Hall 2012a:430). The move for homogeneity as seen in this self-defining process, was therefore also present in councils. Divergent views merited hostile actions, such as in the case of Noetus who insisted on his Christological views and was consequently deposed, specifically because he started with a movement after these 'heretical teachings' (Hall 2012a:429).

Synods who convened to address the issue pertaining to the day on which to commemorate Easter, somewhat resembled the ecumenical councils. This controversy pitted the Roman bishop, Victor, against the Quartodecimans in the second century. Endeavours by a leading bishop to enforce a uniform practice regarding Easter upon remaining congregations, and dialogue with other sees from Lyons, Palestine and Corinth, came into play. This was followed by meetings of bishops to establish 'an ecclesiastical ruling' regarding the matter (Hall 2012a:430). It was gleaned by Eusebius from letters of correspondence that were not only formally amongst regional bishops, but also of local discussions amongst colleagues as confirmed by Polycrates of Ephesus. This cannot be regarded as a regional gathering with the intent of issuing universal decrees – a concept that developed only in the fourth century.

According to Hall (2012a:431), the apostacy that resulted from the Decian persecution and its implications for the period of AD 249-251, provides the records of councils, pertaining to their composition and procedure. The same evidence proves the convening of synods before which involved bishops of Africa and Numidia under Agrippinus, the bishop of Carthage appeared (*Epistulae* 71.4.1; 75.7.4; Schaff 1885e:669, 705). Yet it is reported that Cyprian had healed a schism in AD 251 by convening a meeting with co-operative bishops, deacons, and priests. Cyprian then seemingly regularized annual synods, though there was some discontinuity with his death, formally acknowledged by the Nicene Council (cf. Hall 2012a:431). Edwards (2012:368) also affirms the convention of synods which followed the Roman senatorial format. This serves as confirmation of how the growing monarchical bishopric would also be enhanced in its authority through the instrumentality of councils. Cyprian, in this regard, became representative of the development of the council as a tool of ecclesiastical polity, as Ignatius was of the development of a monarchical bishopric.

Hall (2012a:431) emphasizes that available evidence argues for less bishop-dominated councils. They rather appear to have been composite of not only the clergy but also the laity during the early stages. Cyprian insisted that the *confessores* (influential laity who were resilient during persecution) were expected to also formulate a judgement in council together with the priests and bishops. The laity would also participate with a collective voice in the same manner as to the way in which secular courts were run, swaying the judgement through their reactionary behaviour. This serves as confirmation that originally the councils had the involvement of the laity who were representative of the Christianity that was not as Hellenised and not influenced by the development of an ecclesiastical polity. Hall (2012b) suggests that this originated from councils as meetings of the members of a local church, which in a city scenario might be dispersed between several congregations with no voting power, and where the council would strive towards consensus in matters of practice and doctrine (Hess 2002:29-33).

The procedures of these councils had political undertones, which was possibly taken advantage of by Constantine to make the synod his tool. Hess (2002:29-33) establishes that even before Constantine, amongst the methods used in running the council there was a parliamentary procedure (cf. also Edwards 2012:368). Another procedure, like in the debate between Origen and Heraclides, focused on gaining consensus through examination of a subject and arriving at a common interpretation. This would tie in with the philosophical framework of Christianity in the second century.

The blueprint of the parliamentary process would be the manner in which the senate, or alternatively the local provinces and municipalities was run (*Hist Eccl* 6.11.1-2; 6.29.3-4; Schaff 1885k:402-403; 437-438). According to Eusebius, these meetings were responsible for the selection of bishops. A stenographic record of a council held at Carthage, called the *Sententiae LXXXVII Episcoporum*, serves as evidence. These documents note how, during a meeting in September 256, letters referring to the issue at hand, were reviewed by Cyprian as the presiding bishop, after tabling his opinion enquired from the eighty-six bishops present, after which a consensus was struck. There are seemingly many more of these records.

### **7.3.1 Councils *en route* to ecumenical orthodoxy**

The above accounts of how there was an effort for unity and harmony throughout councils in the third century, show that, as Hellenism was widening its grasp upon Christian theology, the councils would become the hubs of consolidating Christian philosophy. The ascending significance of bishops is notable, as some of these councils which were also attended by the laity would primarily become a clerical issue. This was a game changing dynamic where the bishops became the thought leaders. With reference to the political nature of local synods, Edwards (2012:368) observes how parliaments of bishops above ninety were very hard on any divergent views, more than other political institutions of the time. Therefore, even before the arrival of Constantine, synods were gaining momentum in deciding the politics and climate of Christianity. The reference of Meissner (2000) to Bauer regarding the cultic process, is therefore much in effect here. Seemingly the ecumenical orthodoxy was very much episcopal in its emergence and essence.

Hall postulates how the transcripts and synodical *statuta* (statutes) would develop through the centuries from these origins, and therefore also the derivative for canon law. Though Hall is only referring to provincial synods, the ecumenical or universally worldwide idea of a bishopric convention prior to Nicaea would be the Antioch synod which, itself detached from the Nicene narrative, would not be significant.

Conclusively 'internal structures of the church gave it an empire wide focus' (Hall 2012a:432), whilst an endeavour for unity made it the rightful catalyst for the emperor, as he wanted to establish *One Empire under One God* (Hall 2012a:432). The concept of canon law grew parallel with the councils, as this was a derivative of these councils.

### **7.3.2 Emergence of canon law**

Coupled with councils and their involvement with polity was the authoritative statements issued from them which would be law. Beginning with the council in Elvira in AD 306 where the issue of celibacy was made law, councils became the ground for issuing universal rules or canons, whilst the Arles synod of AD 314 consolidated the practice imperially with twenty-two canons being issued from the meeting (Pennington 2012:390-392). Pennington (2012:390-392) argues that it was not only the ecumenical councils that produced canons that remained authentic, the neo-Caesarean council

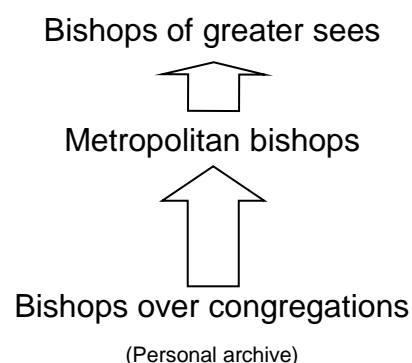
for example issued decrees which were later on recognized in both the East and West. Also given the legislation of Constantine later on concerning the authority of councils and bishops, canon law would become law. Nicaea showed that views from the influential and powerful bishops would be decreed from imperial episcopal assemblies damning all who would not accept. This led to Cyprian who combined both councils and a monarchical bishopric.

### 7.3.3 Cyprian's episcopacy

The views of Ignatius on unity as guaranteed in the episcopacy have already been discussed. Cyprian also emphasized the authority of the hierarchy with his calls for unity under the episcopacy (Hall 2012b:474). In light of the growing influence of the pious confessors, Cyprian emphasized that the authority lied with duly appointed bishops. In his *Epistles* 33.1 Cyprian (Schaff 1885e:756) cited Matthew 16:18-19, concluding: 'Thence through the changes of times and successions the ordination of bishops and the organisation of the church have come down, so that the church is established upon the bishops, and every act of the church is directed by those same superiors (*praepositios*)'.

The churches throughout the Empire paralleled the systems of the Empire. In an echelon type of hierarchy, the episcopacy had eminence.

DIAGRAM 2



Hall (2012b:474) observes how there was a hierarchical structure that had influential bishops of the greater see on top who would also interact with each other. Under them were the metropolitan bishops who themselves were overseers of the bishops over

congregations. This gives a background to the correspondence and schismatic elements seen in the Arian controversy, where both Arius and Alexander would appeal to other clergyman bishops, seemingly from the influential centres. Events that preluded the Nicene Council during the Arian controversy, entailed the intricacy and strength of the episcopal structure at that stage.

However, the effectiveness of the structure had a great effect on secular systems. A strong metropolitan bishop, for example, facilitated standard record systems of synods and their creeds, as well as ordinations. It seems that those around the imperial centre, Rome, and in Egyptian Alexandria, had more influential sees that were responsible for the metropolitan, and a bigger radius surrounding the city (Hall 2012b:475). The existence of such an establishment explains the swaying movements by Miltiades of Rome, or the move by the emperor to shift the venue of the council in AD 325 from possibly Ancyra to Nicaea, for fear that the presiding bishop there would incite discord.

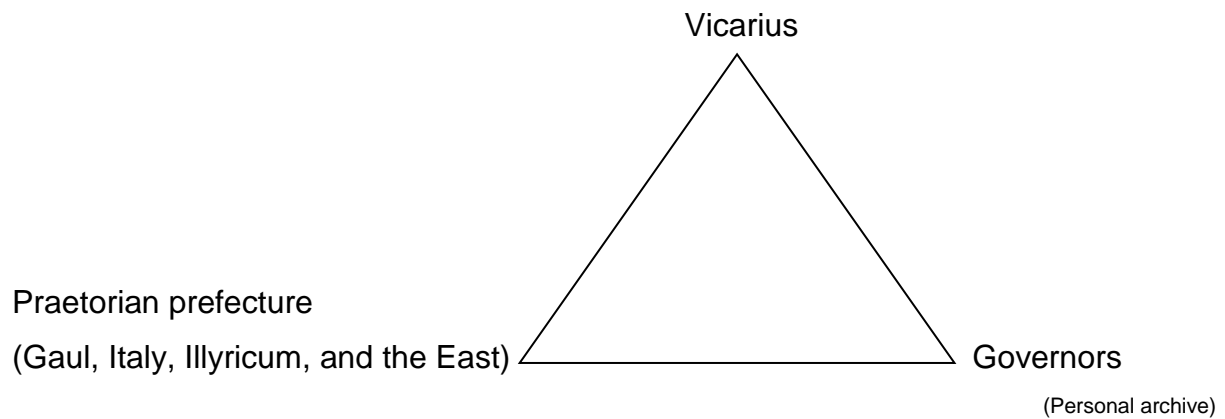
Van Dam (2012:350) states that metropolitan bishops would convene provincial councils, handle conflicts amongst bishops, and even between bishops and their respective congregations. They were immensely powerful, because of the civil prominence of provincial centres where they presided. The hierarchy also endured rivalry and conflict, proving how the events in Christianity were on a trajectory that were not directly attributable to the emperor alone. It was as if Christianity was a wild horse tamed by the emperor and had reins put on it, setting it on a wild gallop on a certain path.

According to Hall (2012b:475), the emerging leadership structure was not always existent. The early church of the New Testament, though, had territorial responsibility, such as described by Titus 1:5. Despite this, the presiding of James during the first council as depicted by Paul, did not translate to the authority that is seen exercised by bishops at that stage in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (s.a.), which is a record of administrative positions in the military and civil offices (Kelly 2006:184). Though the record is also affected by the constant dynamics of the Roman polity, the tetrarchy already existed before Constantine. The church was politicized by Constantine, whilst romanizing itself administratively and Hellenising itself theologically. According to the *Notitia Dignitatum* (s.a.) there were approximately hundred provinces that were governed through a



systematic hierarchy. The majority of the provinces were under a vicarius who was the official that supervised the provincial governors, whilst there were also the praetorian prefects.

DIAGRAM 3



The praetorian prefects were responsible for the dioceses and the grouping of provinces into fourteen units, which at some stage during the tetrarchy were increased. The roles included judicial, financial, and imperial public works. These would gain more eminence later on, when Constantine proclaimed that though the rulings by *Vicarii* or *comites* could be appealed against none, one could appeal against the ruling of a prefect, for it was the emperor's ruling himself (Kelly 2006:185). At the bottom of the administrative base would be governors.

It appears that in Christianity the administrative feature that would reflect and correspond to the imperial governance structure was the episcopacy with its growing eminence and influence and also the authority that came with the geographical location. Even before Constantine, the bishopric had a political hierarchy of a kind which was significant for several reasons, dependent on the champion for the idea (cf. Leithart 2010). For Ignatius this meant unity under the episcopal leadership, with a single bishop for each congregation (Brent 2009). For Irenaeus, heresiology was a factor of divergence from the thought leadership of the episcopate, who taught the proper traditions and doctrines (Minns 2010). For Cyprian and Tertullian in Africa, unity under the acknowledged authority of the bishops was of great importance (Hall 2012b:475).

### 7.3.3.1 *De unitate ecclesiae* (On ecclesiastical unity)

A prominent document, *De Catholicae Ecclesiae* (On the universal church), resonated with Cyprian's ideology concerning ecclesiastical unity and the authority of the episcopacy. The episcopal councils in Rome and Carthage in AD 251 had some issues with the *lapsi* and the Novatian controversy. These councils consolidated the episcopal authority, leaving bishops as 'arbiters of membership, admission and exclusion in the local church' (Hall 2012b:477). The entrenched position of bishops would be unchallenged by the growing influence of the pious laity in the persons of the confessors and martyrs.

In AD 252 dissident priests made Fortunatus a bishop under the leadership of Felicissimus, a deacon. Concurrently Maximus, who was a Novatian sympathizer, was made a bishop, enjoying considerable influence amongst African provinces. It appeared that Novatianism had maintained ground, causing a schism, since it entailed independent separate structures that were rogue and not in full conformity with the established authority of the Catholic Church. In the document, Cyprian, in a dualistic manner, attacked every schism and heresy as diabolic. As mentioned earlier, concerning the note in *Epistles* 33, Cyprian argued for the position of Peter, the apostle, as appointed by Jesus, stating that there can be no fellowship and unity outside the system, and no church other than the one founded on Peter (Hall 2012b:478). In his document, Cyprian urged unity and solidarity amongst bishops, also referring to the Novatians who intended an alternative episcopate for Africa.

Cyprian (*Unit Eccl* 10-14; Schaff 1885e:744-746) envisioned the unity of the church as rooted in one centre, bound by the episcopate, thereby enabling the church to reach out to the world. In his Epistle to Antonianus 51.1.2 (Schaff 1885e:582) he equated communication with Cornelius, the bishop, to harmony and concordance with the Catholic Church, whilst he incriminated contact with Novatian as pervasive. Whilst mentioning the letters from Antonianus, sent by 'Quintus our co-presbyter', Cyprian's critical tone about the Novatian influence on the brethren showed that a strictly guarded hierarchy was the one credible to handle issues of the lapsed (*Epist ad Ant* 51.2, 5; Schaff 1885e:582, 583). Here Cyprian was championing for a Catholic orthodoxy, just like Optatus before him. However, the Novatians, just like the Donatists and Melitians – the controversial parties in the prelude to the Nicene controversy –

were representatives of a stricter viewpoint that would be critical to the leadership for what they perceived as compromise. As already established, this becomes the antithetical argument for the influence of Hellenism in creating a viable environment for ecumenical orthodoxy to emerge. The Novatians were not completely conformed to the newly emerging homogeneity.

Brent (2009:269-270) has established that Novatian himself was orthodox, claiming no heresy. Any reaction to Novation in this context was rather central to the political nature of episcopal authority. Cyprian (*Epist ad Ant* 54.8-10; Schaff 1885e:606-608) adopted the pagan idea of magisterial authority as signified by the *sella curialis* (the seat representative of the magistrate's geographic domain), for the excommunication of Fortunatus was accomplished by men entitled to 'the highest respect' (*Epist ad Ant* 54.9; Schaff 1885e:606), this being a reference to the bishops. He clearly traded off the apostolic succession claim that was correspondent to orthodox teaching, against a pagan constitutional model correspondent to Cornelius' claim to the episcopate (Brent 2009:271). This actually was an echo of the narrative of the Donatists and Donatus, and the Miletians and Miletius.

Hall (2012b:479) concludes that Cyprian articulated an ecclesiology urging 'a concrete unity of the church, bonded...by the spiritual authority of bishops duly appointed in succession from the apostles and in unanimity with each other'.

### **7.3.3.2 Ecumenical orthodoxy and episcopal establishment**

From the above discussion on Cyprian it appears that there was a development of an ecclesiastical episcopal clerical elite. As members of the church, these bishops were not just at spiritual par with everything of the church, but as clergyman they also fulfilled a prominent role, whilst they held themselves in higher regard than the rest. The episcopal feature was elementary in the build-up to ecumenical orthodoxy, as an intrinsic element at all phases of the dynamics – from schismatic elements, Judaism, and the episcopate – as thought leaders would chart the way. During the philosophical period they were the theological gurus whereas, with these events they intrinsically attained political significance. The political intervention of the emperor at Arles and Nicaea was merely a consolidation of emerging structures that needed an enforcing arm.

### 7.3.4 Constantine and the bishops

Before looking at the councils after Constantine and how they had become ecumenically orthodox, the research explores the manner in which the new Christian emperor interacted with the church leadership of the day. How did Constantine react to the unifying authoritative element of the episcopacy, seeing that it would help to unify the Empire? Barnes (2011:133), a scholar on Constantine, refers to the impact of certain legislation that made the bishops an imperial extension:

- The legality of church councils: The emperor declared these to be divinely inspired as reported by Eusebius. The emperor gave the council rulings a legally binding force (VC 4.27.2; Schaff 1885k:827-828). In Eusebius' words, governors were not allowed to rescind what had been decided at councils, for the emperor esteemed the priests above the magistrates. It is noted that, in a way, certain allusions can be made to the judicial authority of prefects.
- The right of bishops to trial by their peers: Above all citizenry, the bishops were liable to judgement, not to the state, but to their colleagues. This was despite the heinousness of the crime committed. Their worst punishment would be excommunication and deposition, and this would be enforced by the emperor. Athanasius' accusations and trials are an example in the 330s.
- Quasi-judicial powers of bishops: There is abundant evidence that bishops presided over judicial cases, called the *episcopalis audentia* (bishop-overseen hearings), brought into the Roman judicial system. Eusebius (*Hist Eccl* 7.30.7) noted that Constantine was simply building on an already existent framework, since one of the complaints against Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, was that he 'made easy money from those enmeshed in lawsuits wishing to buy relief' (Maier 2007:247), this being in the late 260s shows that the principle was already there.
- Bishops were made 'conduits of imperial *largesse*': The emperor, apart from making an exemption for clergy not to be involved in civic liturgies, went a step further with donations to the church. The emperor consolidated the authority of the metropolitan bishop by channelling the donations through them (*Hist Eccl* 10.7.2; Schaff 1885k:614-615). Coupled with this (as mentioned earlier), councils themselves became more imperial in their expenditure. Some of these donations lay at the root of the imperial intervention, such as in the Donatist

controversy, where a divided African church with two primates would give the proconsul a challenge on who was to be accountable for the imperial benefactions (Phillips 1917; Roldanus 2006).

- The emperor himself was entangled in the anti-Semitic drive: There was legislation against Jews. The emperor forbade Jews to own Christian slaves, or Christians to turn against Jews, in a reversal of the long-standing peace with Judaism in the Roman pantheon. Constantine as the Christian emperor joined in denouncing the murderers of the Lord. He attempted to Christianize Jewish towns through church building (*Pan Haer* 30.4.1; Williams 2009:131).

### **7.3.5 Bishops after Constantine**

In the literature study the impact of the era of Constantine has been referred to. This section explores the idea further. Van Dam (2012:343) discusses the development of episcopal politics with the aid of the emperor. In Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*, Constantine exclaimed, 'I too am a bishop, anointed by God' (VC 4.24; Schaff 1885k:826). Constantine, as noted in the legislation that he put in place, acknowledged the role of the bishops in ecclesiastical issues and actually extended their authority into secular matters as discussed above. More and more the nobles and castes from the higher classes came to compose the bishopric, since it became a more attractive office to municipal governance. In that new era, the episcopal network became more modelled on imperial administration (Van Dam 2012:344).

The imperial connection increased, as it is clear that bishops became the prefecture of the imperial leadership in the Constantinian dynasty and even later. Constantine's influence in making the episcopal office attractive by attaching to it an immunity of performing civil service like *decurions* (government officials), went a long way in Christianizing many nobles. Van Dam has established that a large number of prominent bishops of the early fourth century were from this scenario. Augustine, for example, whose father was a municipal decurion, was a lecturer of rhetoric in Milan before he became the bishop of Hippo. John Chrysostom's lineage too had a record of civil service (Van Dam 2012:346). These dynamics were indirectly influencing the Christian climate as well as the political jostling and machinations prior to the councils that made them episcopal polity agendas. This feature can be traced to the last part of the fourth century, when senators and veterans of the war were invited into clerical

service such as in Gaul. Bishop Ambrose, for example, was a governor turned bishop. The political implication of imperial Christianity upon the episcopacy was building upon the framework already in existence. Though a later phenomenon, the shift by aristocrats to the bishopric entailed language and ideals from imperial administration syncretised with Christian governance – this is a consequent of the early fourth century.

#### **7.4 SUMMARY**

In the summary an attempt is made at answering one of the research questions: Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy, or could there be other influences?

Behind the Arian controversy and the council of Nicaea lies the untold narrative of clerical polities. Barnes (2011) perceives that personal vendettas laid underneath the controversies (cf. VC 3; Cameron 1999:258-259). In fact, the growing eminence of the metropolitan poses the question if Nicaea was a hallmark for imperial Christianity or rather the rise of episcopal polity with imperial leverage (cf. Leithart 2010).

The councils appear to have been elementary to the growth of Christianity, beginning with the Jerusalem assembly (Ac 15), yet it is their transformative and evolving elements that are of importance for this study (cf. Tilley 2012; Hall 2012b). The emphasis upon homogeneity and recognition of episcopal authority as binding (Cyprian *Epistulae* 33.1, 54.9; Pennington 2012), added the councils as co-catalysts to the self-defining Hellenised Christianity which was identified as a key socio-cultural factor in the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy.

Furthermore, the hierarchy of the episcopate was on a trajectory of secularization, finding much resemblance with imperial structures (Diagrams 3; 4). Constantine envied the sound power structure of the church organization and allied himself to them (Brent 2009). Bishops became imperial extensions to a certain degree, however, this was temporary as it appeared that they rather had won the influence of the Empire and retained their autonomy (cf. Barnes 2011; Leithart 2010).

From these observations, linked with the literature study, the research has reached this conclusion: The most significant amongst the three formative factors of the hypothesis in the roadmap of ecumenical orthodoxy appears to be not amongst them inherently. It is rather a convergence of the tri-sectorial hypothesis through which episcopal polities emerged as an entrenched authority and link between the three factors. Politics was influential in the environment nurtured through the Constantinian peace, but ecumenical orthodoxy emerged not due to the political wit of the emperor alone.

As an already established fact, the self-defining philosophized Christianity with an emerging orthodoxy was the key. However, without the political arm this would remain side-lined to the Empire and lack the ecumenical impetus. The schism itself was the igniting spark to the self-defining and differentiate trajectory, but again it was just an inciting element. Ecclesiastical polities, however, appeared to have been a component of the three factors, whilst bishops and clergy as thought leaders were strong in the anti-Semitic drive. The foundation of a universal orthodoxy rang in the works of Irenaeus, as well as in a united movement under authority in Ignatius.

Last, the resilient organization visualized by Cyprian was the link needed by the emperor to have a role in Christianity, and ultimately using Christianity as an imperial unification strategy. As seen, this was the development of the revisionist ideas to Eusebius and Constantine, thereby contributing anew to the field of early Christianity.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **RESULTS**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapters 4 to 7 have investigated the title and topic of the research, whilst Chapter 7 already contains results to a certain extent, because it is a deduction from the main body of document analysis. Chapter 8 explores the results from the study at length, as the immediate findings from the study are discussed and reviewed with further elaborations, leading to the development of related subjects for discussion. Amongst the results are revisionist views about Constantine, Nicaea, and even adapted sociological models with which to interpret the historical Christian phenomenon. The results in this chapter are a synthesis of the investigation and the analysis section of the implied findings.

#### **8.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY**

This section relates to the first issue that is explored in the literature study. The self-definition of Christianity from both Judaism and Hellenism appears to be one of the prevalent matters in the early church. Both contextualization and self-definition, being critical elements in the expansion of Christianity, brew the church that emerged in the fourth century, and are then enhanced through political consolidation from imperial patronage. It is against this background that ecumenical orthodoxy made its appearance.

The comprehension of how these two aspects were framing the setting from which ecumenical orthodoxy stemmed, entails their continual significance and relevance to Christianity. This also undermines any attempt to magnify the impact of one element or feature as a cause or catalyst to major changes in Christianity, in this case an orthodoxy affirmed by the councils, that entrenched church leadership and was backed by the emperor.



### 8.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHISMATIC AND CULTIC ELEMENTS IN THE FORMATION ORTHODOXY

Whilst acknowledging the role of Constantine in ending the persecution, and his benefactions of imperial patronage, it is emphasized that this alone did not influence the form of Christianity. Rather, the emergence of a form of orthodoxy, affirmed and authenticated by the councils, was a consolidation of developing ideas of homogeneity in faith and practice amongst Hellenised Christians who were denying their Hebraic roots. The research indicates how schismatic elements from Judaism could in some way have contributed to orthodoxy, as the different groups defined authenticity as based on homogeneity. This has been dubbed the cultic process (cf. Meissner 2000: 66). With Christianity soaked in Hellenism, it became a question of philosophy against philosophy. This retells the story of Nicaea in many respects, not necessarily as the glorious dawn of a universal Christian orthodoxy, but rather as the triumph of a sectarian position over another sect.

#### 8.3.1 Need for a synthesis after the antithesis

Heresy was undesirable and demonised. It provoked the need for delineation of the boundaries of orthodoxy (cf. section 4.3.8). Nickelsburg (2003:195), for example, describes how the radicalism of Marcionite anti-Semitism, despite its 'outrageous' notions, would at a later juncture be composite of orthodoxy, which was factored in by the trajectory of the apparent hostility to Judaism, as Christianity was bent on a path of separation. Whilst, on the other hand, Christianity was shooing Judaism away, they were courting gentile philosophy. The anti-imperial sentiment fuelled by persecution was the only deterrent of this modus of kinship with Roman tradition. A Hellenised Christianity seemingly would do anything to become a *religio licita*.

Concerning the influence of 'heretical-divergent' thought, the question can be posed, if it had not been for Marcion's radical composition of Pauline works, would the church ever endeavour to stamp its foot with regards to the canon (cf. Gamble 2012:197)? Added to this: Would it show a stern face against the *Nag Hammadi* codices that seemingly would disturb the organizing theology of the books associated with apostolic tradition and authorship? Whilst the *Nag Hammadi* finds suggest the existence of alternative views in the early church, it is only one amongst many, such as the Manichean library of *Medinet Madi*, *Turfan*, *Oasis of Dakhleh*, and the *Cologne Mani*

*codex* – all of them have shed more light on the Manichaean religion (Markschies 2003:59). This bolsters the idea that the turbulent wave of schismatic and cultic activity inside Christianity, that gave rise to a powerful hierarchy, was the main formula for an ecumenical orthodoxy. The emperor would, however, facilitate the realization if he had the resources and legislation that brought this once ‘tempest in a teapot’ into the ‘arena’ of imperial politics. These cultic processes and the resultant unity being forged, could have been the enticing link to the emperor, because unity in the Empire could be achieved through a unified Christianity which, though schismatic, was overallly networked and unified ideologically (cf. Brent 2009).

### **8.3.2 A desirable unity and union**

Brent (2009:278-284) and Schott (2008:125-127) have discussed the convergence of philosophy, ideology, and theology with politics. In Constantine’s anti-polytheistic polemics he mocked the pagan pantheon as chaotic, arguing that the Christian monotheism proved to be more orderly. For instance, in Constantine’s *Oratio ad Sanctorum Coetum* 3.3-4 (Schaff 1885k:850), he derisively taunted the order in sacrifice, questioning to whom one should pray first. The concoction of the *Logos* ideology through the influence of Origen was more than desirable. It would cement Constantine’s claim to sole emperorship amongst the people as Divine. *One God* though, represented in his Son could only be typified by *One Emperor*, and *One Empire*.

## **8.4 A NEW MODEL**

In the research, certain sociological models are discussed with regards to Jewish sects. In similar, yet distinct manner, the research’s hypothesis is adapted to a modular form, as a development in review. As established in the literature study the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy in light of the three factors, schism, Hellenism and politics, shows the significance of a certain idea – that of authority in the Christian movement. Christianity, being a factor of these three, emerged with a visible hierarchical leadership through the three phases. The three factors are placed in a sociological framework in relation to Jewish sectarianism by Chalcraft (2007:56). It can be idealized as

- social dynamics – a schismatic element (the Christian-Jewish separation – the first stage of self-definition);

- syncretism – Hellenism (through the second Sophistic, Gnosticism – the second stage of self-definition);
- political – imperial intervention (that of the emperor, also a new dynamic of leadership: Imperial plus ecumenical polity).

From this the research deduces the emergence of the omnipotent councils that defined orthodoxy and affirmed authority in the church with the endorsement of the emperor. Whilst this and the emergence of a more political and elite bishopric is common knowledge, the research's significance lies in the ability of establishing the role of this episcopate as being a dominant feature and catalyst that tied all three catalysts together. Politics influenced Christianity greatly to an ecumenical orthodoxy embracing the world as secularized philosophy, whilst detaching itself from its Jewish roots, but after the findings the political element of great significance is not necessarily the emperor, but the episcopacy. Ecumenical orthodoxy as found at Nicaea was both imperial and episcopal, and signalled a new dawn of ecclesiastical politics in events not distant from AD 325. This process continued and reached a significant epoch in the medieval era.

#### **8.4.1 A sociological model: Deductions from Judaism and implications for later Christianity**

These establishments came as an adaptation from the findings of the research to an analysis by Piovanelli (2007:157). Piovanelli discusses the second temple with reference to scholars like Cohen (1991), Davies (2007), Nickelsburg (2003), and Saldarini (1988). The result of their work was an enhanced understanding of the Jewish matrix, which was a new ideological and sociological construct of Maccabean politics. Put on a trajectory, according to Piovanelli (2007:156), the works reflect primary differences only in application of advanced anthropological, cross-cultural and social-scientific models, with the more recent reflection, a greater alertness to these principles, more than their earlier counterparts. The advancement in social theory has facilitated a modification of interpreting the Jewish social matrix.

Referring to the models of Weber 1930 in the sociology of religion, Piovanelli argues that these models can be abused, but still urges their application, not as a

mathematical formula, but as a 'flexible and heuristic tool' (Piovanelli 2007:157). When looking at Meissner's construction of the cultic process model where he refers to the sectarian model of the second-temple period (Meissner 2000), the researcher observes the following possibilities: Whilst this study refers to a time after the second-temple sectarian matrix, insights can be derived from the period that helps to review the impact of socio/ethnic dynamics, syncretism, and politics in the emergence of the Pharisaic eminence and second-temple theology. However, a review of these, together with the emergence of the second-temple elitist aristocracy as well as the resultant sects helps to imply a model to review Christianity from. Being a study of the rise in ecclesiastical authority and orthodoxy, interactions with politics in the Jewish second-temple era have implications on ecumenical orthodoxy.

This argument becomes possible, because of the Hellenistic and syncretistic nature of the Judaism of the post-exilic period, and also the political dynamics that appeared with the Roman occupation. Klawans (2012:140-141), for example, in a revision of Josephus' views on second-temple theology, mentions the battle against the Torah tradition and innovation. He alludes to the growing influence of the Pharisees against the waning unpopularity of the untraditional Sadducees. The intricate relationship between the theological yet political skirmish is apparent. In the wars of the Jews (*Wars* 2.16.2; O'Bannon 2017:1249) Josephus even referred to the fact that the composite of the Sanhedrin, inclusive of the Pharisees, was so peace loving and would tolerate much provocation from Agrippa and the Roman rulers, whilst on the other hand, in *Antiquities* 18.1.6 (O'Bannon 2016:956) the Pharisees were leaders in revolt for people to assert their liberty. The Pharisees' criticism of Herod and their strong patriotism would entail that they had the air of most sects who themselves had either revolutionary or transformational elements against the current order (Piovanelli 2007:160).

#### **8.4.1.1 Ecumenical unity between the Pharisees and the cultic process**

Klawans (2012:173) refers to the way in which Josephus used the popularity of the Pharisees against a national and theological unity resembled in the temple. According to Boccaccini (2002:123), the Zadokite Judaism from which the Sadducees derived, had undergone a Hellenistic apologetic phase, thus making it useful for a worthy comparison with the movement towards ecumenical orthodoxy. In the New Testament

the historicity of the Pharisaic authority is endemic: Klawans (2012:174) underlines it by referring to the 'reflections of Pharisaic popularity in the eventual predominance of Rabbinic Judaism'. He attributes their popularity to their emphasis on custom which, according to Wilson (1970), would be their reformist agenda, coupled with their ability to resonate politically with all the other sects with their revolutionary features. Jewish unity under the Pharisees was therefore a reality, the keeping of tradition by those who would not support the external forces. This echoes the cultic/self-defining process mentioned in the research, as well as the consolidation of Pharisaic power which was nothing without the political backing of the priestly connection and the Roman powers.

Unlike early Christianity where the last catalyst of imperial intervention was all but taken positively, given the history of the imperial-ecclesiastic relations there, we see enemies who agree that they need each other. Here we find much resemblance with the formative manner of episcopal politics in early Christianity as mentioned in the study. The orthodoxy that would emerge in rabbinical Judaism was Pharisaic, whilst ecumenical orthodoxy was a reflection of episcopal philosophy and theology. From the perspective of the rise in Zadokite power, the model of social dynamics, syncretism, and politics can get valuable instruments to study Christian eras.

## **8.5 ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY: DERIVED EPISCOPAL POLITY**

As the significance of councils escalated, so also did the influence of those who comprised the councils. The significance of the episcopal functionaries or bishops opens a window for the study through which one can measure factors surrounding the ecclesiastical politics. The bishops were, as already noted, urged on by the emperor to a council, so as to reach consensus and maintain the *pax* (peace) and *homonoia* (harmony) of the church and Empire respectively. However, things would turn the other way around. The increasing political role of bishops during the era of Constantine was a formalisation of the structures established within Christian circles. If ever the term 'imperial Christianity' in the age of Constantine deserves credit, this would be imperial Christianity through episcopal extensions. As established by Brent (2009:286), Constantine could use bishops but he could not replace them. The bishops shaped Christianity at Nicaea in AD 325, though under the auspices of the emperor it would simply be the emperor entangled in episcopal polities that included philosophy and the battle for authority. However, the dominance of the bishop would later on overreach

that of the monarchy/emperor, and the future would see the councils and the composition of the councils being the kingmakers instead. Ecumenical orthodoxy, for its political import, was the birth of episcopal polity. In this way the French monarchy has emerged with the decline of Rome, as a brainchild of ecclesiastical manoeuvring and consolidation of power.

### **8.5.1 The French monarchy as an episcopal reform**

The evidence for the significance of the episcopal political role is notable, for example in the rise of the Carolingian dynasty, parallel to the prominent bishops who actually appeared to have nurtured this brainchild. As shown in the research, Moore (2011:23) asserts how the bishops became an elite ecclesiastical-social clique through the councils – this is possibly derived from the language and authority attached to the councils. As the Empire waned, the bishops took over the mediating role from the aristocracy, as the barbaric tribes came to the scene (Moore 2011:23). There was much coherence between the episcopal power and the Roman aristocracy, in other words the bishopric had graduated into a senatorial/prefecture function in some way. Ambrose of Milan alluded to the idea of the episcopate's separation from secular careers, as it was balanced with an exercise of power. With reference to Arles as the first Gallic council, Moore emphasizes the correspondence of conciliar significance to the bishops' newly found legal powers in the *episcopalis audientia* (hearings done by bishops). Subtly, despite the changes in the cultural and political terrain, the bishops carefully preserved their own 'aristocratic and legal functions'. They did it in such a way that even during the times of Roman instability in civil wars and divisions, theirs was an intact system (Moore 2011:23). Hence, the capacity of the episcopacy to shape the future of Europe, is attributable to an understanding of the manner in which the syncretistic and political dynamics fostered orthodoxy even in governance. Moore (2011:55) observes: 'We can view the councils as mirrors partially clouded by time, but reflecting the steady development of the episcopate as an aristocratic body engaged in the wholesale transfer of Roman cultural ideals to the church and the emerging governance by bishops over their regional communities'.

This observation about councils resonates with how the cultic process saw the growth of the superstructure of the church, in this case the growth of the political, yet ecclesiastical episcopate. The bishops in ecumenical authority were merely extended

functionaries of imperial politics until they received a sort of autonomy where they could challenge the emperor. The revival of Arianism by Constantius II saw the writing of the *Liber contra Constantium* (Wickham 1997:14) against him by bishop Hilary of Poitiers. Though it is said to have been published after the emperor's death, the document resembled a polemic against a persecutor of Christianity, in that case, Christian orthodoxy as found at Nicaea. Actually the battle became nastier and patriotic with the bishops identifying themselves as *Gallicani episcopi* – Gallican bishops. The growing voice and importance of bishops, coupled with their parallel development alongside the councils, which gave the notion of an ecumenical orthodoxy, would imply that ecumenical orthodoxy lied not primarily in imperial politics. The process that had brought that element of Christianity to that level, then rather maintained an evolutionistic continuum.

The iconoclastic controversy, for instance, saw the Roman pope Stephen entangling the Frankish king Pippin against his Greek enemies. In their philosophical battle for orthodoxy, the bishops were then using the kings instead. The Carolingian dynasty was an episcopal brainchild (Moore 2011:244), the idea being one derived from theocratic rule. In the words of Moore (2011:244), 'having participated in the Carolingian coup d'état, the bishops found their status heightened'. The dynasty of kings that was established, would work hand in hand with the bishops to repay the favour of ecclesiastical backing, whilst for the episcopal elite a consolidated enlarged kingdom, for example into northern Italy, meant a re-engagement with churches east of the Mediterranean, and unifying their order ecumenically (Moore 2011:245). Ecclesiastical politics then became decisive of the destiny of nations, as the bishops incited wars and conquest, whilst the kings did it at their blessing. Imperial Christianity would be resurrected in Charlemagne (Moore 2011:246), but this time because of the bishops, not of the emperor. The turn of events implied the intricacy of conciliar politics in ecumenical orthodoxy and the political nature of the episcopal authority. Brent is already cited as stating that the episcopal hierarchy and its authority were not a result of Constantinian politics. If anything, the emperor hijacked strategically the growing momentum which, though without his empowering activities, would not be as significant.

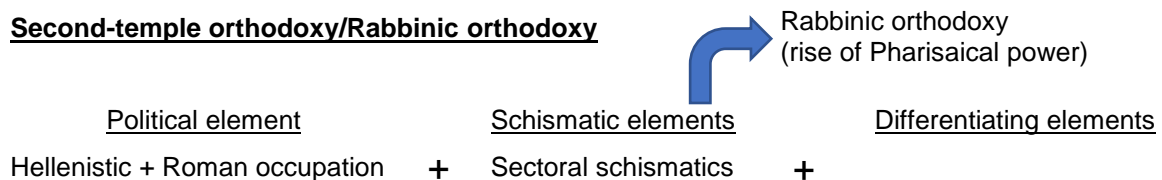
## 8.6 DEDUCED AND APPLIED MODEL: DIAGRAM 4

As a synthesis to the above information, Diagram 4 (below) is formulated. This model is a consolidation of the results mentioned thus far. It is also an application of diagram 5. This diagram shows the deductive manner in which the model was derived from second-temple theology. It also reiterates how this is formative to the research hypothesis in the investigation that has reviewed the pre-Nicene and post-Nicene era. Last, it reviews the implications of the model upon Frankish Christianity which is considered a notable progression of the cultic emergence of the church.

### DEDUCTIVE ANALYSIS

#### Era 1

##### Second-temple orthodoxy/Rabbinic orthodoxy

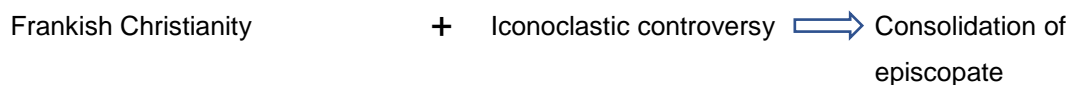


#### Era 2 (Hellenic enculturation: Investigation)

##### Ecumenical/Nicene orthodoxy



#### Era 3 (Imperative Analysis: Frankish Christianity)



Creation of Carolingian empire      Growing alienation with eastern Christianity

(Personal archive)

This diagram is resultant from the study. In line with the hypothesis which is looking at the significance of the formative catalysts to ecumenical orthodoxy, the diagram synthesizes the deductions from the investigation in order to formulate a model of reviewing the Christian eras developed from the respective hypothesis.



In a tri-sectorial demarcation, three eras are compared with regards to the manner in which the three catalysts – or their equivalents – being studied, impacted the shade of Christianity or religion in a manner that resulted in an orthodoxy. Each era directly links to the argument for either its implicative (implications upon the era being studied) or deductive role (implication from the era being studied).

The first era is that of the second temple, from which emerged the second-temple orthodoxy. The interaction of the factors is derived from this preceding era in history, as it is visible in their reference to cultic and acculturative elements, that were prevalent in that era just as in Christianity. Politics is deduced in both the Greek and the Roman occupation and the emergence of sects, whilst acculturating elements were evident in the form of Hellenism, and the schismatic influences were deduced from the sectarian behaviour. These resulted in the emergence of the Pharisaic rabbinic orthodoxy. The convergence of the three factors is deduced as to have been prevalent in the emerging religious and political clique of the Pharisees.

The second era is the one that preceded the council of Nicaea. Here the interaction of the Jewish-Christian schism, Hellenistic enculturation, and imperial interposition is highlighted. This is done in light of the fact that the rise of the episcopate happened in the same era.

The last era to be reviewed that also entrenched the findings from the investigation, is the era which follows the decline of Constantinian influence and the power of imperial Rome. This was in reference to the era that saw the rise of the Carolingian dynasty and the Frankish Christianity – all this being a brainchild of the episcopacy. The iconoclastic controversy served in this case as the schismatic element, and an index to the widening rift that emanated between eastern and western Christianity. Deduced from it all was the consolidation of the episcopacy.

## **8.7 PATRIOTIC ORTHODOXY AGAINST ECUMENICAL ORTHODOXY: THE DONATIST AND ETHIOPIAN CHURCH (ANTITHETICAL ARGUMENT FOR HYPOTHESIS)**

In the literature study, documents relating to the Arles synod and Donatist controversy are reviewed. The Donatist controversy is studied as a prelude to Nicaea, which was

one of the most important councils during Constantine's reign. In line with the deductions regarding the manner in which the Donatist controversy was cultural and resurgent, certain findings are explored here. As noted earlier by Tilley (2012:388) and Roldanus (2006:40), African intransigence by the Donatists proved a brick wall to the sweeping unity desired by Constantine in the African church.

As cited, the possible source of the obstinacy of the Donatists/Numidians was their insistence on their local practices. The manner in which the Donatists managed to outlive the imperial imposition of the episcopal authority, was proof of the firm beliefs that held their cause together. It did not lose any resilience from the spirit built during the persecution. Their uniqueness in practice also paved the way for certain possibilities such as the not so Hellenistic origins, but rather Jewish roots, of their faith. It has already been established in the research that Christianity in North Africa did not necessarily trace to apostolic tradition like the rest, as evidence affirms the possibility of Jewish links (cf. Tilley 2012:384). Added to this was the Punic anti-Latin sentiment and the Berber connection which showed that there was already strong sentiment against Rome. This was not helped by the weak Romanisation of the mainland against that of the coastal lands.

This seems to have paralleled the Ethiopian Christianity which remained singularly Jewish, especially after surviving the Islamic invasions. The resistance of Ethiopian Christianity against Catholicism and their insistence of traditional practices derived from Jewish backgrounds, give a worthy comparison. The significance of the matter is established by the influence of the incarnated concept of Ethiopianism to which African nationalism was also traced, according to Kalu (2006:586).

A review of the impact of the Donatist conflict as intransigence and resistance against ecumenical orthodoxy, has implications on the antithetical argument for the hypothesis. In harmony with the model of Roldanus, who argues for the metamorphosis of a Christianity that was acculturating and contextualizing itself to Hellenisation, the research proposes that the schism propelled the church towards Hellenism – Hellenism being in this case a syncretistic element or catalyst that was partially formative of ecumenical orthodoxy. The fact that certain geographical locations were not that Romanised, despite the expansive Hellenisation in the

Alexandrian Hellenistic period, would imply divergent cultural notions. These seemingly lay underneath much of the Donatist controversy. The Jewish link to the Punic Christianity would imply that one factor or catalyst was missing in this region, as they were not as anti-Semitic as the rest of the new movement.

To further prove the incapacity of imperial politics that ensured a universal practice amongst the Christians, the resurgence of the Donatist controversy and intransigent ideology was nurtured by this conflict. Lyman (2012:304) observes that ecumenical councils such as the Arles synod in AD 314, were meant to unite a religious community that was not only separated geographically but also culturally. This formed the nurturing ground for the growth of a local orthodoxy and posed a challenge to the emerging ecumenical orthodoxy. Lyman (2012:304) emphasizes the fact:

Appeals to antiquity and the apostolic succession of the episcopacy, as well as pilgrimage, shrines and liturgical traditions, strengthened not only the larger religion of Christianity, but the local incarnation of it...Donatist controversy and the Miaphysites in the East reflected the strength of local...tradition not easily dislodged by councils or imperial edicts...*but rather councils cemented these local practices intransigently.*

Lyman attributes the exclusive nature of Donatist Christianity to the ideologies of Cyprian and Tertullian. Despite the fact that Cyprian had been significant in the foundation of the episcopal political link, the political framework through which he had seen the rise of that hierarchy was one of opposition to the tyrannical emperor Decius (Brent 2009). A faith in persecution defined the ontological features of the Donatist movement. They could not endure the pervasion of the faith through the *traditores* (compromisers) and *lapsi* (fallen), but would defend it at all cost against even the imposition of emperors. That devotion born during the persecution was resonant in the riots that broke out in Carthage in AD 317 (Leithart 2010:160).

The language used in accounts describing these riots, praised the Donatists for their unswerving loyalty to the true cause which saw them fall prey to the barbarism of the fallen Caecilianus and the Roman soldiers. The manner in which the Donatist movement saw that, echoed the stories of the martyrs (Barnes 2010:123,153). Even Augustine came to the defence of the Donatists, preferring rather to label them not as

heretics but rather schismatics (Lyman 2012:305). Despite the hard hand of the emperor upon them in AD 411, the Donatist movement, though downsized, did not disappear (Lyman 2012:305). This further proves Roldanus' point of the importance of the cultural element in the formation of Christianity. It actually appears that the post-persecution reactions were a source to many intransigent schisms that may have been reincarnated Novatians, Donatists, and the Meletians – the greater possibility being the affinity of Novatianism with Donatism as they all transpired in relation to Carthage. Cyprian, who has come to represent in some way the episcopal ideology's attack on Novatian and consolidation of Cornelius, using arguments from heathen philosophy, is notable (*sella curialis*). The episcopate was to be kept intact at all cost. Divergence would not be tolerated (*Epistulae* 27.3.1; Schaff 1885e:544; Brent 2009:271).

With the apparent success of the ecumenical orthodoxy which also was foundational in its emerging champions – the emperor and the newly-found episcopal elite – the success of any deviant movement would raise eyebrows, and such is the case of the Donatists. The failure to acculturate the Donatist Christianity to the prevalent syncretistic elements that were coupled with a singular separatist theology, proved that the strength of the ecumenical councils was not wholly based on imperial interposition, but also on the events preceding to their arrival. The antithetical evidence for the hypothesis was a failure of ecumenical orthodoxy, where there was inadequate enculturation/Hellenism. This deduction and the preceding results are not exhaustive as the research had its limitations.

## **8.8 SUMMARY**

An answer is imminent to the research question as to which of the influences – the schism (Christianity after AD 325), Hellenism or imperial intervention – can be seen as the main catalyst to the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy. According to Roldanus (2006), the narrative of Christianity is one of enculturation or rather contextualization. The emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy became the adaptation of Christianity to the schism, Hellenism, and politics. Meissner (2000) reiterates the significance of cultic elements in the emergence of a superstructure. Marcion's contributions are an example of the self-defining elements in Christianity. Despite his excommunication being a heretic, the canon (Gamble 2012) and anti-Semitic trajectory (Nickelsburg 2003) can indirectly be connected to him. The canon, in his

case, was an emblem of the self-differentiating and defining orthodoxy that emerged, whilst the anti-Semitic element would be significant of the self-defining elements in the Christian-Jewish social matrix. That is why Marcion's antithesis necessitated a synthesis (Chapter 6).

These factors contributed to the emergence of the superstructure which was envied by the emperor for its political potential. This bolsters the idea that the turbulent wave of schismatic and cultic activity inside Christianity that gave rise to a powerful hierarchy, was chiefly the formula for an ecumenical orthodoxy. The emperor would, however, facilitate the ultimate consummation of the process, as he had the resources and legislation that brought that once 'tempest in a teapot' into the 'arena' of imperial politics (cf. Chapter 6).

All these preceding deductions have led the research to a revisualization of Constantine. The Constantinian question from which the notion of an imperial Christianity originated and a domineering influence of politics over Christianity at the turn of the era, have been addressed in this study. A contrast of the specialist scholarship on Constantine was done, balancing the image of whom and what the emperor was (Drake 2006; Barnes 2011; Leithart 2010). The synthesis of the interaction of the factors mentioned in the research question and hypothesis saw the formulation of a new model. Reasoning from the sociological studies by Piovanelli (2007), the research developed a sociological approach to the investigation, formulating its own model. The significance of an emerging political episcopate against the waning influence of imperial control and authority is further reviewed, substantiating the importance of the ecclesiastical polities. The Frankish case is of note with regards to the political adaptation and transformative element of the episcopate (Moore 2011). The Donatist and Ethiopian churches were notable emblems of the developing element of a patriotic orthodoxy, against ecumenical orthodoxy as an element factored in by inadequate enculturation. The intransigence of the Donatist tradition against what was commonly acceptable by the rest of the Christian world, needs to be stated here. By looking therefore at the emergence of ecumenical councils and factors that were catalysts, was limited to that alone and not an intrinsic investigation of ecumenical orthodoxy. Yet there are notable discussions

that stemmed from the exploration of documents during the document analysis. These are mentioned in the concluding section.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 8 the results from the investigation are explained, with deduced models which came about. The contextualization of Christianity brings to view the significance of schismatic and cultic elements in the formation orthodoxy. This entailed the deduction of a sociological model, based on the three catalysts at review, that derived from Judaism and had implications for later Christianity. The intertwined connection between ecumenical orthodoxy and the derived episcopal polity is also established together with an antithetical approach to the hypothesis, by reviewing the resistance of the Semitic-Punic acculturated Donatists.

Chapter 9 is the concluding section to the research. This chapter provides a summary of the literature review and the document analysis, followed by a conclusive summary and synthesis of the research findings. The investigation's limitations are highlighted as well as the suggested further research.

#### 9.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The study is a review of the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy as consequent of the three factors, Jewish-Christian schism, Hellenistic enculturation, and the imperial intervention of Constantine. The study is done against a backdrop of scholarship which has a categorized ecumenical orthodoxy as a predominant consequence of imperial involvement (Wickman 2017:280). A review of the significance of the political intervention of the emperor is an entailed gap in research. The dominant figure of an emperor is implied in some of the substantial biographers of his life, like Eusebius (*Hist Eccl; VC*), Lactantius (*Div Inst*), and other ecclesiastical histories. Any scholarly review, therefore, becomes a rather reflective discussion of these primary sources.

The possible significance of other catalysts was discussed, because different scholars have analysed varying degrees of how much imperial involvement was formative to ecumenical orthodoxy. For Drake, the emperor was into 'consensus politics' or rather

as asserted by Schott (2008:124), 'the fostering of a tenuous entente among various Christian factions and *moderate* pagans'. The imperial attempts were endeavours for an ecumenical/universal concord throughout the Empire, cemented by religious toleration.

Brent (2009:286) hints that the scenario that was consequent of ecumenical orthodoxy, could be envisioned rather as imperial influence versus episcopal polities (section 3.2.2.1). Cyprian's ability to emphasize a hierarchy that could be resistant to persecution, implied an autonomous phenomenon that could not be controlled totally by the emperor. As Brent (2009:286) alludes, 'it would be a mistake to see any radical, post Constantinian, reconstruction of the roles of bishops and Synods so as to imagine that these had become creatures of Constantine's Empire resultant of his policies'.

For Leithart (2010:198) the emperor was simply in a pursuit of a policy for the promotion of Christianity. Alfodi (1969:31) argues that Constantine became a '*Novator turbatorque priscarum legume et moris antiquitus recepti*' the "wicked innovator and tamperer with the time hallowed laws and the sacred ethical traditions of the fathers"'. Barnes refers to the inevitability of the two polities – ecclesiastical and imperial – which merged together, where the one without the other was incapable of achieving the unity they so desired. In the words of Barnes (2011:141): 'The Arian Controversy has close structural resemblance to modern party politics'. To this can be added that it was embraced by imperial policy in order to forge ecumenical orthodoxy.

In this study the researcher has rather argued for a formative process that would embrace imperial involvement where the emperor was not a key player, but rather a factor amongst others. The study has focused on the formative catalysts that preceded the events surrounding Nicaea. The review of the role of the emperor redefined Nicaea whilst enhancing the scenario due to the acknowledgment of Hellenistic enculturation that was incited by the Jewish-Christian schism.

Due to these observations there cannot be one dominant factor or catalyst, abstractly independent from the other factors. From this consideration a revisionist approach that attempts a consideration of many possible factors was then merited, and models were developed as a synthesis of the research findings.



### 9.3 SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The document analysis done in Chapters 4 to 7 has been in a tri-categorical grouping, in reflection of the three catalysts implied from the onset of the study. A cumulative summary of scholars' viewpoints on the four chapters has been done. Here the summary of scholarship viewpoints will be followed by the deduced research findings as a conclusion.

The schism was implied when, according to Vermes (2012:62), nascent charismatic Christianity was deviating from its Judaic roots. Concurrently Doran (1995:57) establishes the intricate connection between the two institutions, Christianity and Judaism, as evidenced by parallelisms in, for example, the apocalyptic literature. For Doran, however, the schism depicted an active alienation through anti-Judaic polemics and Hellenistic apologies, rather than a mere deviation from its roots. Marcus (2012:99) hints that the demise of Jewish Christianity had propelled the schism after the hostilities between the Jews and the Roman Empire. This comes against the argument of Klawans (2012:182) that a strengthened rabbinic Judaism, after and during the Jewish-Roman hostilities, ultimately enhanced the schism (cf. Marcus 2012:101). The *Birkat haMinim* was possibly the last trigger which saw the eclipse of Jewish Christianity, as gentile Christianity emerged.

According to Drodge (2012:231), Justin Martyr established the link between the schism and the Hellenistic phase of Christianity in self-definition, as his was one amongst many attempts of propping up Christianity as a philosophy. The formation of an exclusive homogeneity appears to be another contribution of Hellenistic influences (Rives 2005:17) which saw the emergence of the heresy-orthodoxy dichotomy. As Christian writers championed orthodoxy against heresy, there was a consequential cultic self-defining impact upon Christianity (Meissner 2000:66). Councils emerged amongst the list of methods that would entrench orthodoxy (Brakke 2012:259-260).

North African Christianity and the Donatist schism served as an antithetical substantiation to the importance of enculturation as a prerequisite for the success of the emerging orthodoxy (Tilley 2012:386). North African Christianity can actually be associated with Semitic origins, as the schism's impact was not complete. Ultimately an episcopal hierarchy emerged in this self-defining process that consummated the

orthodoxy agenda (Ignatius *Eph* 4.1-6.2; Mitchell 2012:123). It appears that the monarchical bishopric became the link between the imperial interposition and the self-definition process that riddled Christianity (Brent 2009).

The Donatist controversy which was a consequence of the strong native Semitic enculturation and persecution, became the blueprint for the imperial reaction to schisms in the Christian church (Roldanus 2006:38; Leithart 2010:157). From western (African) Christianity, Constantine found himself interposing in eastern ecclesiastical feuds, usually between the recently entrenched bishopric and their presbyters – the first being the Melitian controversy (VC 2.64-72), which served as a prelude to the Nicene controversy (Roldanus 2006:72). Barnes (2011:108-109) asserts that the focus on the eastern church was also riddled by political motivation, which served for the emperor as a *Nova Roma* agenda.

This eastern focus has proved the emperor to be a friend of Christianity, as he promoted the building of Christian temples and the demolishing of pagan temples. When the emperor involved himself in the Nicene controversy, it was apparently in a philosophical debate, though ultimately he wanted the unification of Christianity and nothing more (Roldanus 2006:73). The nature of the Nicene controversy implied the continuation of the Hellenistic self-enculturation in Christianity (Young 2012:468). Nicaea appeared more cultural and political (cf. Behr 2004:22), and also took on an anti-Semitic shade in some of its canons (Barnes 2011:125).

Barnes (2011:140) asserts that the political implications of Nicaea was a merger of imperial and ecclesiastical polity. There was a new dynamic that emerged with the councils – that of canon law (Pennington 2012). Parallel to the development of Christianity in the self-defining process is the development of an ecclesiastical aristocracy (cf. Van Dam 2012:350). This hierarchy loomed large in the whole narrative and became a possible frame of deducing events throughout the era, using the catalysts, schism, Hellenism, and politics as eras.

#### **9.4 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

Whereas the preceding section discusses the document analysis that was done through an excerpt of scholars' views, the researcher has made his own conclusions

which also answered to the research questions posed at the beginning of the research. The document analysis reviewed the three catalysts, enhancing the view of ecumenical orthodoxy and its emergence by showing the significance of all the three catalysts.

The Council of Nicaea which was the first ecumenical council and the first council of universal importance in the Christian world, was a turning point in the religio-politics of Rome. The following question has to be answered, which of the following influences can be seen as the main catalyst to the emergence of the ecumenical orthodoxy: Christianity after AD 325, the schism, Hellenism, or imperial intervention (section 1.4)? Commonly known as the Constantinian peace, the reign of Constantine marked a change in imperial ecclesiastical politics, but was it the Constantinian peace that ushered in an imperial solution in the form of ecumenical orthodoxy, or the conciliar authority in Christianity (section 4.3.1)?

The next question posed was, how did the schism between the Jews and Christians contribute to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy? The influence of either politics or Hellenism, as well as the schism significantly hallmarked in the emergence of Christianity were explored, especially as the intensification of Roman-Jewish hostilities from AD 66 was accomplished in the document analysis (section 4.4.6). The Jewish-Christian schism itself was a propeller and substantial formative factor to the anti-Semitic stance of early and latter Christianity. This became formative to ecumenical orthodoxy as a spiral for Christianity into Hellenism, and the anti-Semitic shade that since then became composite to Christian orthodoxy as emerging in AD 325. Scholars with a revisionist approach to the schism, like Yoder (2003) and others, left the research with a conclusion of a schism as spiralled trajectory of alienation, rather than a great separation (cf. section 4.3.8), though the intrinsic significance stems from how the schism, through the self-definition process, enabled the trajectory into philosophized Christianity that would undergo the cultic process.

The question, Could Hellenism have a significantly formative role in the emergence of the conciliar orthodoxy that appeared after AD 325? is answered as follows: Referring to the influence of philosophy upon Christian ideology, a seemingly established factor was culturally formative to the self-defining and differentiating nature of Christianity. In

the time from Justin to Irenaeus, Christianity entered a philosophical continuum from which orthodoxy was emerging. As Christianity parted from its Judaic roots, embracing a Hellenistic shade, a new phenomenon emerged, dubbed by Meissner (2000) as the cultic process (cf. section 5.5.2), in which there was emphasis upon homogeneity, whilst diversity was stamped out. Also, the significance of Hellenism and the enculturation process in the formation of ecumenical orthodoxy was antithetically proven by a review of the intransigent divergent Christianity of North Africa and its corresponding controversies (cf. sections 5.6.1; 5.7.1). Hence where there was inadequate Hellenistic enculturation, where Jewish Christianity resurged, ecumenical orthodoxy would not easily succeed. A superstructure emerged, which the research attributed to an emerging ecclesiastical polity. The entrenchment of the episcopate and growing influence of the councils were an invention of the two first factors of the hypothesis, namely the schism and Hellenism. The preceding was made possible because of the self-defining formative process, hence with the emergence of an enforced homogenous orthodoxy, also emerged an ecclesiastical hierarchy to enforce the homogeneity in and through the councils.

The next question was, What role did imperial intervention play in the formation and establishment of ecumenical orthodoxy? Christianity as a self-defining, assertive, and intransigent organism was inherited and embraced into the imperial political strategy for unification of the Empire. Cyprian, Ignatius, and Irenaeus (cf. sections 7.2.2; 7.3.3; 6.2) had done their part influencing the development of a rigid power and thought structure, seemingly to the envy of the emperor. The emerging episcopal hierarchy became the link to imperial intervention. As the emperor became more visible as an agent of orthodoxy in the councils through this phenomenon (cf. sections 6.4.1; 6.4.2), it appears that imperial patronage and beneficence to the Christian leadership was the chief contribution as a catalyst to the emerging councils. Undoubtedly without imperial largesse the councils and controversies would remain marginalized from reality. Yet despite this, apart from the already emerging structure which had an entrenched hierarchy and conflicting ideologies, the emperor would be an abstract catalyst.

On the question, Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy or could there be other influences? the following analysis followed. Hellenism shaped the emerging Christianity which, without

the imperial intervention, would not become a universal orthodoxy. Seemingly these two elements corresponded in significance, though the antithetical argument for Hellenistic enculturation inclined towards Hellenism as a more significant catalyst for ecumenical orthodoxy. A consideration of these facts implies that there was a dynamic element that was not implicit to the process that ultimately saw the emergence of ecumenical orthodoxy. This would be the monarchical episcopate or ecclesiastical polities, since this is the great link to which all the respective catalysts would converge. Christianity as a resistant plant, growing amidst the hostile environment of the Galerius, Decius, and Maximin persecutions, knowing only brief respites of tolerance, was then exposed to the fertile and humid catalyst of imperial patronage. It was from such an image that ecumenical orthodoxy and ecumenical councils emerged. In revisionist manner, the research came to this conclusion, also formulating a model (section 8.5) for the evaluation of a religio-political phenomenon in different eras.

The main question of the study is: Which of the following influences can be seen as the main catalyst to the emergence of the ecumenical orthodoxy: Christianity after AD 325, the schism, Hellenism, or imperial intervention? The review of the episcopal polity, its influence, and the revisionist views of history deduced from the continual review in primary sources, portray a not so straightforward situation. The self-defining process which Christianity underwent, as established from the onset of the literature study, remains crucial to any deduction or analysis.

What then bore more weight? Was it Constantine or the Hellenistic enculturation or the schism? The distinctions of Judaism and Christianity had not been clearly marked, but were invented in a progressive process of alienation (Boyarín 2010:26,27). Can this lead to a substantial conclusion with regards to the formative impact of the schism? What bore precedence between the development of philosophical thought and the self-defining orthodoxy versus heresy dichotomies, or rather the cultic and socio-political emergence of an ecclesiastical polity? The appearance of the emperor on the Christian scene is for sure an innovating dynamic, but despite the 'obvious' influence (cf. Ferguson 2005), was it as a catalyst within an emerging dynamic or rather as mechanical lever in total absorption of powers at play?

The research acknowledged the very tangible role of politics. Post-Nicene Christianity, as conceived by preceding events and at Nicaea, is in many respects imperial Christianity. The imperial nature of councils, benefactions, legislation (cf. Barnes 2011) and Constantine's crusade for unity, is substantially formative to the ecumenical unity agenda (cf. Behr 2004). Despite the imperial intervention and its impact on Christianity (cf. Leithart 2010:249), a disregard for the crucial self-defining process formative of orthodoxy and possibly resultant to the schism, would paint only but a partial picture. As reviewed, the cultic self-defining process of the second and third century convoluted with it the way it emerged. As Christianity adapted to the diverse neo-dynamics, its form was affected and it would somewhat evolve. Along with the philosophical enculturation, the self-defining process seemingly saw the rise of a powerful hierarchy.

For the researcher the episcopacy is the tying link, although politics was dominant, but not necessarily imperial politics, because in a vacuum a state within a state (*Epistles* 50; cf. Brent 2009) could seldom achieve anything. The episcopal hierarchy consolidated the authentic teaching, and unified the movement as seen in the works of Irenaeus and Ignatius (*Adv Haer; Mag*) respectively (cf. Minns 2012; Brent 2009). The possible threat to a uniform movement was eliminated by the episcopal establishment and the evolving councils, thereby divergence and diversity were put out of the way. If anything, the episcopate and the conciliar politics made Christianity the unifying element the emperor was looking for. If Christianity had not been what it was when Constantine came to power in AD 312, despite his spiritual claims and former sympathy with Christians (cf. Lenski 2006), the emperor would just establish an Edict of Toleration and not much more. Added to this, the system of ecclesiastical leadership which posed an enticement at a massive control of popular opinion, actually turned to make the emperor's hands full. He got more than he bargained for, as the autonomy and assertively independent nature of ecclesiastical polity seemingly became more apparent to succeeding emperors (cf. Leithart 2010). This brought the research to conclude on the inevitability of all the catalysts.

## **9.5 CONCLUSIONS FROM FINDINGS**

### **9.5.1 A convergence of factors**

On the question, Which of these identified influences played the most important role in the construction of ecumenical orthodoxy, or could there be other influences? another question follows: Was it politics or Hellenistic syncretism, and what is the proper formula for ecumenical orthodoxy? The review has shown that all factors are significant. Notably they all appeared inevitable to the cultic, syncretistic and social process, and the efficiency of the last two catalysts appears to have been bound together by the episcopal function. The impact of Hellenism in the formation of theological thought through philosophy and an anti-heretic agenda, is immense, whilst without the environment nurtured by the emperor, this could or would mean nothing with regards to universal or ecumenical domination.

### **9.5.2 A self-defining continuum**

Whilst the preceding facts could seemingly have well been established even before this research, the relation of the chronological events from the schism to the cultic process as formative of events leading to the first ecumenical council, adds voice to the emerging views that hint for a redefinition of the Nicene triumph as something else other than 'imperial Christianity'. It was not all about the imperial intervention, as the significance of episcopal polity and the cultic process was evident. The manner in which Christianity emerging at that stage managed to outlive imperial instability later on acted as a good example. This cultic process, so elementary to the development of Christianity, appears to have been factored in by Hellenistic tendencies in the battle for philosophy and the establishment of barricades against heresy (cf. Meissner 2000).

The failure of the ecumenical council of Arles to maintain the ecumenical peace in Carthage and the resurgence of Arian polity and Christological controversies are evidence that ecumenical orthodoxy's backbone was not only imperial affirmation, as put in the words of Athanasius, not a *deus ex machina* (god from the machine) on the imperial throne (cf. Leithart 2010:187). There was rather a need for acculturating groundwork in respective areas where canon law was going to be acceptable as universal (Roldanus 2006:24).

### **9.5.3 Rethinking Eusebius and Nicaea**

Ferguson (2005:24) and Leithart (2010:133), amongst other Constantinian scholars, have hinted on a revisionist view of Eusebius and Nicaea. A study of Christian history not necessarily as a theological narrative is insightful, with emphatic regard for primary historical sources (Danto 2011:30; Inowlocki & Zamagni 2011:98-118.). For instance, a look at the religious nature of the Roman Empire before Constantine and how the emperor was *pontifex maximus* (high priest), make Constantinian meddling in ecclesiastical affairs a phenomenal dynamic, yet the unique factor only stems from the emperor being a Christian, not necessarily religious. Eusebius and later on Agapetus did not substantiate an evident 'ecclesiastical imperial bootlicking', as commonly held, but rather set a code of conduct expected for rulers. Associating piety with great rulership akin to Divinity (VC III) would incline monarchs to seek moral legitimacy from the church (cf. Drake 2006). The political relationship between the church and society was a rather complex issue that had been in many cases oversimplified.

### **9.5.4 A more nuanced approach**

The research has established, concurring with Roldanus (2006) and Meissner (2000), that the form of Christianity that had its orthodoxy consolidated by imperial powers, was in no way a result of that era alone. Rather, the faith that had transcended cultures, from charisma to philosophical dogma, was the type of Christianity guarded by the emperor, which was one that already had structures capable of embracing and syncretically engulfing all the pagan rites and forms.

The study has accomplished this as a blend of sociological theory and historical study of early Christianity. In the research corpus, the utilization of a heuristic model is implied. Such a view of history is profitable, as it brings into consideration the many respective dynamics formative to Christianity as a religion. Rather than abstracting events in Christianity as only a theological matter, irrespective of its environmental attention to socio-political dynamics, gives a balanced picture.

Ecumenical orthodoxy seems to become a term more prevalent later on in the history of Christianity, especially after the AD 1054 East/West rift in Christianity. However, in most cases, referring to the emergence of the word/principle in association with the councils, an anachronistic use of the term is implied. As the research endeavours for



a unity in uniformity, implied by a seemingly enforced homogeneity, it gave new meaning to the idea of ecumenical orthodoxy. The growing pursuit of universality as seen in the works of Irenaeus (cf. Minns 2012) and unity as seen in the works of Ignatius (cf. Brent 2009), after the embrace of Christian philosophy by Justin Martyr (cf. Doran 1995), placed Christianity upon a trajectory that saw it becoming less and less tolerant of diversity and divergence.

In a somewhat generic review the following can be deduced. Schismatic self-defining events between Christianity and Judaism saw a further self-defining delineation of groups/sects in Christianity and their positions, that appears to have been a catalyst to the formation of orthodoxy or standard practice. This pursuit of uniformity was also accompanied by the consolidation of other groups relatively in advantaged positions to others. From these positions these groups influenced orthodoxy, the process which then saw the structural and doctrinal emergence of a universal church. Without the emperor's hand, therefore, structures were already in place for a strong universal church.

#### **9.5.5 Other possible contributions**

The significance of the research, despite the already well-documented history of Christianity in the first three centuries, would be that, whereas certain scholars had detached the Christianity emanating from the Nicene-Constantine era to anything other than imperial intervention, this study has established links in the schism, Hellenism, and imperial Christianity. This ensures a flow of understanding to the dynamics that shaped eras of Christianity.

##### **9.5.5.1 Redefinition of Christian eras**

Rather than referring to the gulf and chasm between the second and the fourth century where the emperor seemingly entered the scene as a supreme bishop, dictating the future of Christianity, the study adds voice to scholars like Leithart (2010) and to revisionist views of a circumspect role of an emperor amidst a turbulent wave of dynamics, which were not prevalent due to a lack of centrality in the political-social arena.

#### **9.5.5.2 Emphasis on Judaic roots**

An endeavour to emphasize the separation from Judaism as a catalyst to the Hellenism of Christianity gives significance to the issue of contextualization or rather enculturation, as early Christianity adopted itself to multi-diverse influences. Views like this one can give a comprehensive picture of diversity in Christianity, which continued against all odds throughout centuries.

#### **9.5.5.3 New coinage of a principle**

Despite the documentation referring to the significance of councils and church authority, the term 'ecumenical orthodoxy' is on record as referring to Christianity at a later stage, particularly after the eastern and western mutual excommunication in AD 1054. Yet beyond any doubt the principle underlies the development of Christianity itself and hence its anachronistic use analysing the eventual significance of the councils.

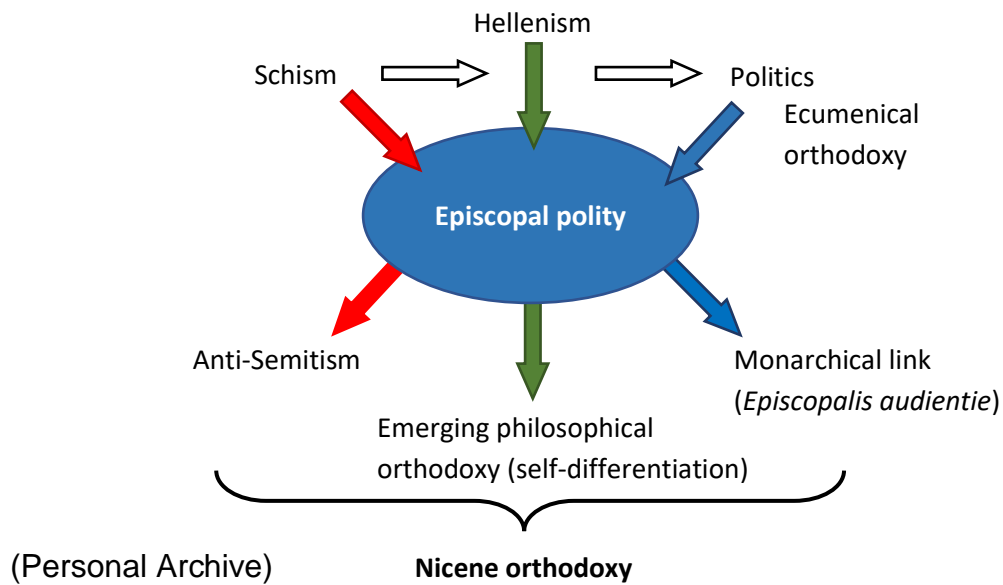
#### **9.5.5.4 Emphasis of a worldview aspect**

Assigning significance to dynamics that appeared as a result of social enculturation, enhances views concerning early Christianity with a missiological view, as has been noted by Doran (1995:58) and Roldanus (2006:6).

#### **9.5.6 Deduced model: Diagram 5**

The analysis of information derived from the document analysis and the section of deductive analysis, led to the formulation of this model. This model is a result of the synthesis of the findings with regards to the emerging phenomenon of ecclesiastical polity. This is the synthesis of the proposed model in Chapter 1, which is formulated at the onset of the research.

## PROPOSED MODEL



This model/diagram forms a synthesis between the literature study and the deductive analysis. It shows the interaction of the three catalysts. Their interrelations and the deduced dynamic of the episcopal polity, all as formative of ecumenical orthodoxy, are highlighted by the arrows. The colour-coding and the specific nature of the arrows is also intentional. First, the topmost part of the diagram illustrates the interaction of the three catalysts at study, how they represent different phases in the history of Christianity, and how these catalysts were casualties to each other as established in the research. After the schism, Christianity was exposed to Hellenistic philosophy and ultimately imperial intervention. These resulted in an ecumenical orthodoxy as normally understood in the history of Christianity. Mutually there are arrows from these elements that go into the greater oval shape, representing how, through the self-defining enculturation process, the factors were possibly causal to the dynamic of ecclesiastical/episcopal politics – the alternative meaning being how these factors all converge within the dynamic of episcopal/ecclesiastical politics. The arrows exiting the oval shape show how the same catalysts were transformed through the dynamic of episcopal polity. The schism and its impetus remained formative to ecumenical orthodoxy, as deduced from the anti-Semitic trajectory that was retained within Christianity, consolidated by thought leaders, and forming part of the orthodoxy emerging at AD 325. Hellenism is acknowledged for the emerging philosophical orthodoxy that became consequent of self-differentiation (the whole process of a homogenous exclusivity included). For that it is established as one of the key elements

to the self-defining and also cultic process of which the monarchical bishopric was consequent. The third catalyst – politics – is highlighted at the rightmost side of the diagram, close to ecumenical orthodoxy as the consummative catalyst within the self-defining trajectory. The conclusion being reached concerning the significance of the monarchical link and stemming from the political structure of the episcopal polities which would conveniently be integrated by the emperor into his unification policy, is highlighted by the corresponding red arrow. Mention of legislative/statutory powers such as the *episcopalis audientie* (episcopal hearings) is made to serve as an example showing how materially the council and its bishops made ecumenical orthodoxy a reality. The centrality of episcopal politics to the development of ecumenical orthodoxy and perhaps as the rightful ‘politics’ to be mentioned amongst the catalysts, is highlighted by the colour-coding of the arrows that is similar to the colour of the oval shape that represents the dynamic of the episcopal polities.

This diagram concludes the synthesis of the research findings. The next section reviews the limitations to the investigation.

## 9.6 RESEARCH LIMITATION

This research which is an exploration of the subject ‘ecumenical orthodoxy’, has its limitations. With relation to the hypothesis, the limitations are here elaborated on. There are those which already existed prior to the study, and there are those that became apparent at the conclusion and synthesis of the findings. First, at the onset of the research the use of the term ‘ecumenical orthodoxy’ was explained as an anachronistic exploration of the principle behind ecumenical councils, and not ecumenical orthodoxy as related to the Eastern Orthodox Church (cf. section 1.4). The research rather concerned itself with the factors or catalysts that emerged from the Nicene orthodoxy, the Nicene Council’s ecumenical and imperial characteristics, being the features associated with this phenomenon of Nicene orthodoxy. As the research progressed, the argument that was developed around the factors, investigated the schism, Hellenism, and imperial patronage.

Second, the research did not quite well position itself with regards to Bauer’s theory on orthodoxy, but rather used an implied understanding of it (Decker 2015:6-10; Bauer 1971). Given the renowned nature of Bauer’s treatise on *Orthodoxy and heresy in*

*earliest Christianity*, it would be sensible to establish the research's relation to this, since the mere allusion to orthodoxy in the hypothesis and question could have led the reader to look forward to this deliberation.

Third, the research in its assumption of the capacity of the three factors which it deemed parallel, even to the chronological development of Christianity, is after all that of an informed assumption which is not conclusive. The primacy of the factors, schism, Hellenism, and imperial patronage, may have been overstated. The findings in relation to the importance of the ecclesiastical polities are evidence of the existence of other influences (cf. section 7.4.1). Other factors could also be considered.

Fourth, the new factorised catalyst of the different polities leaves room for further study. The implication is that the study could perhaps have accomplished more by reviewing one factor, e.g. politics, and then have explored ecclesiastical polity as an outgrowth of politics.

## **9.7 GROUNDS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In the preceding sections exploration was done concerning the immediate findings of the research. It also led to the discussion and scope for further research. The model which was used in the research question can be utilized to further analyse parallels in Ethiopian and African Christianity, as well as the emergence of a national patriotic orthodoxy as a counter to ecumenical orthodoxy. The interaction of the factors mentioned in the research question hint on possibilities of the formative capacity of respective catalysts to Christianity. These possible discussions imply the relevance of further research in Church History using this research as background.

The Ethiopian resistance against foreign forces in the person of the Oromo, Muslims, and the Catholic Portuguese, seemingly forms a significant part of the African Christian narrative. In light of the Donatist saga – a prelude and antithesis to the Nicene ecumenical agenda – numerable deductions with regards to the impact of culture upon orthodoxy and the shade of Christianity can be made. Another significant point is that this Christianity would resemble an evolved Judaism, something more akin to 'early nascent Christianity' (Vermes 2012), rather than to originate from the schismatic elements of anti-Semitism. This therefore further substantiates an element of the

hypothesis with regards to the influence of culture. Despite the baptism of Ezana, the young monarch, it appeared that the Hebraic traditions would not be undone (Burton 2007:163, 204; Crummey 2006:457). This is possible, because the Christianity emerging with Nicene orthodoxy was modelled after philosophy and was in many respects anti-Semitic.

The preceding observations concerning the Hebraic nature of Ethiopian Christianity can be coupled with the Sabbath in Ethiopian Christianity. The Ethiopian saga introduces the notion of a national orthodoxy. The concept of Ethiopianism can be explored with regards to its influence on the rest of African Christianity. The interaction of socio-cultural factors and politics, and how this influenced missiology, becomes a key discussion. The debate concerning the vernacularizing and enculturation of theology in relation to the African context, is a subject that needs further research. Kalu (2006) notes how this spiritual emancipation inspired and informed the African resistance on political and militarily level. This shows how resistance to imposed cultural values, even bracketing Christianity, instigated a renaissance and uprisings.

Balkan nationalism's reinvention of orthodox Christianity is further evidence to the self-defining continuum of Christianity that effected another schism in AD 1054 (cf. Olson 1999:159, 252). Balkan nationalism in this case would be part of the expansive geographic exploration of the development of the principle of ecumenical orthodoxy (cf. Kitromilides 2006:229-250). A significant fact is also the intricate connection between clergy and rulers as time went on, such as in the Russian orthodox case, where monarchs seemingly would control clergy and at times clergy control monarchs with obvious implications on the shade of orthodoxy. This introduces the idea of religious toleration and dialogue as a desire for peace and union. Christin (2006:307) shows how cardinal Cajetan, for example, attempted to counter Luther's innovative ideas in 1518, as a run-up to 1521. The German Augsburg peace was a negotiated imperial-ecclesiastical arrangement seen through at a council. The interaction of politics and ecclesiastics in councils was apparently forging the evolving German Christianity (Mout 2006:225).

Finally, the research implies a connection between the socio-political interactions and the Reformation continuum, like evangelicalism, and Methodism in particular (Hill 2003:333; Hillebrand 2005:337).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alfodi A. 1969. *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bardill, J. 2012. *Constantine Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnes, TD. 1981. *Constantine and Eusebius*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Barnes, TD. 2010. *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Barnes, TD. 2011. *Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Late Roman Empire*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Bauer, W. 1971. *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Kraft, RA & Krodel, G. Philadelphia: Fortress
- Becker, AH. 2003. Beyond the Spatial and Temporal Limes: Questioning the 'Parting of Ways' Outside the Roman Empire, in Becker, AH. & Reed, AY. (Eds.). *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 373-392*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Behr, J. 2004. *The Nicene Faith: Formation of Christian Theology*. Vol. 2. Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Boccaccini, G. 2002. *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Bonnet, M. 1959. *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*. Hildesheim: Olms.
- Bowen, G, A. 2009. Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research*. Journal, 9, 27-40.
- Boyarin, D. 2001. Justin Martyr Invents Judaism. *Church History* 70(3):427-461.
- Boyarin, D. 2010. Judaism as a Free Church: Footnotes to John Howard Yoder's The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited, in Dula, P. & Huebner, CK. (Eds.). *The New Yoder*, 1-17. Oregon: Cascade Books.
- Browning, WRF. 2010. *A Dictionary of the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bradley, JE. & Muller, RA. 2016. *Church History: An Introduction to Research Methods and Resources*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Brakke, D. 2012. Self-differentiation among Christian Groups: The Gnostics and Their Opponents, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *Vol. 1: The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 245-260. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Brent, A. 2007. *Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop and the Origin of Episcopacy*. New York: T & T Clark.
- Brent, A. 2009. *A Political History of Early Christianity*. New York: T & T Clark.
- Brewer, EW. & Kuhn, J. 2010. Causal-Comparative Design, in Salkind, NJ. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Research Design*, 125-132. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Brown, P. 2000. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. New ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burton, KA. 2007. *The Blessing of Africa: The Bible and African Christianity*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Cameron, A. & Hall, SG. 1999. Eusebius: Life of Constantine I, in Bosworth, B., Grin, M., Whitehead, D. & Treggiari, S. (Eds.). *Clarendon Ancient History Series*. New York: University Press Inc.
- Cameron, A. 2012. Constantine and the 'peace of the Church', in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 538-551. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cavanaugh, WT. 2013. What Constantine Has to Teach Us, in Roth, JD. (Ed.). *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian debate*, 83-100. Eugene: Pickwick Publications.
- Chadwick, H. 1967. *The Early Church: The Pelican History of the Church 1*. New York: Penguin.
- Chalcraft, DJ. 2007. Weber's Treatment of Sects Ancient Judaism, in Chalcraft, DJ (Ed.). *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances*, 52-73. London: Equinox.
- Christin, O. 2006. 17 – Religious colloquies and toleration, 302-320. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521811620.018>. [Accessed: 12 January 2017.]
- Crummey, D. 2006. Church and Nation: The Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahedo Church (from the thirteenth to the twentieth century). Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521811132.020>. [Accessed: 12 January 2016.]
- Cohen, J. 1991. *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From late antiquity to the Reformation*. New York: New York University Press.

- Collier, CM. 2013. Leithart's Defending Constantine: A Review, in Roth, JD. (Ed.). *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian debate*, 155-160. Eugene: Pickwick Publications.
- Collins, W. 2012. English Dictionary Complete & Unabridged. Available from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english>. [Accessed: 16 September 2017.]
- Cross, FL. & Livingstone, EA. (Eds.). 2009. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cuthill, M. 2002. Exploratory Research: Citizen Participation, Local Government, and Sustainable Development in Australia. *Sustainable Development* 10(2):79-89.
- Dagron, G. 2003. *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*. Transl. by J Birrell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Danby, H. 1919. *Tractate Sanhedrin, Mishnah and Tosefta: The Judicial Procedure of The Jews as Codified towards the end of the Second Century A.D.* New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Davidson, IJ. 2004. *The Birth of the Church: From Jesus to Constantine, A.D. 30-312*. Oxford: Monarch Books.
- Davidson, IJ. 2005. *A Public Faith: From Constantine to the Medieval World, A.D. 312-600 (Monarch History of the Church)*. Michigan: Baker Books.
- Davies, PR. 2007. Sect Formation in Early Judaism, in Chalcraft, DJ. (Ed.). *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances*, 133-155. London: Equinox.
- Danto, EA. 2008. *Historical Research*. Oxford Scholarship Online. Available from: <http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195333060.001.0001/acprof-9780195333060>. [Accessed: 12 January 2018.]
- Demacopoulos, G. E. 2017, Constantine's Wars for God in Siecienski A. E. (Ed.). *Constantine: Religious Faith and Imperial Policy*. New York: Routledge
- Decker, RJ. 2015, The Bauer Thesis: An Overview in Hartog, PA. (Ed.). *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts: Reconsidering the Bauer Thesis*, 6-34. Oregon: Pickwick Publications.
- Denzey, N. 2010, Facing the Beast: Justin, Christian Martyrdom, and Freedom of the Will, in Rasimus, T., Engberg-Pedersen, T. & Dunderberg, I. (Eds.). *Stoicism in Early Christianity*, 176-198. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

- Doran, R. 1995. *Birth of a Worldview: Early Christianity in its Jewish and Pagan Context*. Colorado: Westview Press.
- Drake, HA. 1995. Constantine and Consensus. *Church History* 64(1):1-15.
- Drake, HA. 2000. *Constantine and the Bishops: The politics of intolerance*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Drake, HA. 2005. Models of Christian Expansion, in Harris, WV. (Ed.). *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Compilation*, 1-15. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Drake, HA. 2006. The Impact of Constantine on Christianity, in Lenski, N. (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 111-137. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Draper, JA. 2010. The Didache, in Pratscher, W. (Ed.). *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*, 7-24. Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Drodge, AJ. 2012. Self-definition vis-à-vis the Greco-Roman World, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 230-245. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, M. 1997. *Optatus: Against the Donatists*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Edwards, M. 2006a. The First Council of Nicaea, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 552-567. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, M. 2006b. The beginnings of Christianization, in Lenski, N. (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 137-158. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, M. 2012. Synods and Councils, in Casiday, A. & Norris, FW. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Constantine to c. 600*, 367-385. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- L. Annaei Senecae *Epistularum Moralium Ad Lucilium Liber Primus*. s.a. Epistulae Morales. Available from: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/sen/seneca.ep1.shtml>. [Accessed: 8 March 2017.]
- Elliott, JK. (Ed.). 1994. *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Farina, W. 2009. *Perpetua of Carthage: Portrait of a Third-Century Martyr*. Jefferson: McFarland.

- Ferguson, TC. 2005. *The Past is Prologue: The Revolution of Nicene Historiography* in Den Boeft, J., Van Oort, J., Petersen, WL., Runia, DT., Scolten, C. & Van Winden, JCM. (Eds.). *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Formerly Philosophia Patrum) Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Freke, T. & Gand, P. 2001. *Jesus and the Lost Goddess: The Secret Teachings of the Original Christians*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Frend, WHC. 2012. Persecutions: Genesis and Legacy, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 503-523. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gaddis, M. 2005. *There Is No Crime for those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gamble, HY. 2012. Marcion and the 'canon' in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 195-213. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Given, LM. 2007. Descriptive Research, in Salkind, NJ. & Rasmussen, K. (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Measurement and Statistics*, 251-254. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Grabbe, LL. 2007. When Is a Sect a Sect – or Not?, in Chalcraft, DJ. (Ed.). *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances*, 114-132. London: Equinox.
- Gregg, RC. & Groh, DE. 1981. *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation*. London: Augsburg Fortress.
- Guggenheimer, HW. (Ed.). 2014. *The Jerusalem Talmud*. Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Hall, SG. 2012a. Institutions in the pre-Constantinian *ecclesia*, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 415-433. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, SG. 2012b. Ecclesiology in the wake of persecution, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 470-483. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hellholm, D. 2010. The Shepherd of Hermas, in Pratscher, W. (Ed.). *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*, 215-238. Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Hess, H. 2002. *The Early development of Canon law and the council of Serdica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Hill, J. 2003. *The History of Christian thought: The fascinating story of the great Christian thinkers and how they helped shape the world as we know it today*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Hillebrand, HJ. (Ed.). 2005. *The Oxford Encyclopedia for the Reformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780195064933.001.0001/20/04/2017.
- Howell, MC. & Prevenier, W. 2001. *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hollerich, MJ. 1990. Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the First 'Court Theologian'. *Church History* 59(3):309-325.
- Inowlocki, S. & Zamagni, C. 2011. *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical, and Theological Issues*. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Kalu, OU. 2006. *Ethiopianism and the roots of modern African Christianity*, in Gilley, S. & Stanley, B. (Eds.). *Vol. 8: Christianity: World Christianities c. 1815 - c. 1914*, 576-592. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kee, A. 2017. *Constantine Versus Christ: The triumph of Ideology*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock.
- Kelly, C. 2006. Bureaucracy and Government, in Lenski, N. (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to The Age of Constantine*, 183-205. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitromilides, PK. 2006. The legacy of the French Revolution: Orthodoxy and Nationalism, in Angold, M. (Ed.). *Vol. 5: Christianity: Eastern Christianity*, 229-250. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klawans, J. 2012. *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism*. New York: Oxford.
- Kraft, H. 1955. *Kaiser Konstantins Religiöse Entwicklung*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Kyrtatas, DJ. 2005. The significance of Leadership and Organisation in the spread of Christianity, in Harris, WV. (Ed.). *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Compilation*, 53-69. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Leithart, PJ. 2010. *Defending Constantine: The twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Lenski, N. 2006. The Reign of Constantine, in Lenski, N. (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, 59-90. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Lieu, J. 2012. Self-definition vis-à-vis the Jewish matrix, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 214-230. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lohr, H. 2010. The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, in Pratscher, W. (Ed.). *The Apostolic Fathers: An Introduction*, 91-113. Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Long, DS. 2013. Yoderian Constantinianism, in Roth, JD. (Ed.). *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian debate*, 100-124. Eugene: Pickwick Publications.
- Lyman, JR. 1993. *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius, and Athanasius*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lyman, JR. 2012. Heresiology: The invention of 'heresy' and 'schism' in Casiday, A. & Norris, FW. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Constantine to c. 600*, 296-317. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Maier, PL. 1999, 2007. (Transl.) *Eusebius, The Church History*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications.
- Marcus, J. 2012. Jewish Christianity, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 87-103. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Markschies, C. 2003. *Gnosis: An Introduction*. Transl. by J. Bowden. New York: T & T Clark.
- Meissner, WW. 2000. *The Cultic Origins of Christianity: The Dynamics of Religious Development*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press.
- Millar, F. 1977. *The Emperor in the Roman World*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Minns, D. 2010. *Irenaeus: An Introduction*. New York: T & T Clark.
- Minns, D. 2012. Truth and Tradition: Irenaeus in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 261-273. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell, MM. 2012. Gentile Christianity, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 103-125. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Moore, ME. 2011. *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850*. Vol. 8. Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Mout, N. 2016. Peace without concord: Religious toleration in theory and practice, in Po-Chia Hsia, R. (Ed.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 6: Reform*

- and Expansion 1500-1660*, 227-243; 643-649. Cambridge Histories Online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521811620>.
- Murray, J. 2018. English Oxford Living Dictionaries. Available from: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/inculturation> [Accessed: 13 January 2018.]
- Musurillo, H. 1972. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*. Available from: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/perpetua.htm>. [Accessed on 11 February 2017.]
- Nasrallah, LS. 2010. *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nickelsburg, GWE. 2003. *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity and Transformation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Norton, P. 2007. *Episcopal elections 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: University Press.
- Notitia Dignitatum in Partibus Accidentis*. s.a. Available from: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/notitia1.html>. [Accessed: 4 April 2017.]
- O'Bannon, K. 2016. *Josephus: The Complete Works*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Olson, RE. 1999. *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Pearse, R. 2002. *The Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius*. Available from: <http://www.Tertullian.Org/Fathers/Philostorgius.Htm>. [Accessed 8 February 2017.]
- Pennington, K. 2010. "Caesaropapism" in *The New Catholic Encyclopedia Vol 1: Supplement*, 183-185. Detroit: Gale Publishers.
- Pennington, K. 2012. The growth of Church law in Casiday, A. & Norris, FW. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Constantine to c. 600*, 386-402. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Piovanelli, P. 2007. Was There Sectarian Behavior before the Flourishing of Jewish Sects? A Long-Term Approach to the History and Sociology of Second Temple Sectarianism, in Chalcraft, DJ. (Ed.). *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances*, 156-179. London: Equinox.

- Phillips, V. 1917. *The Work of St. Optatus Against The Donatists*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rapp, C. 2005. *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Rapley, T. 2007. *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*. London: Sage
- Rajak, T. 2012. *The Jewish Diaspora* in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 53-68. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Reuver, M. 1996. *Requiem for Constantine*. Kampen: Kok.
- Reynolds, JM. 2010. *When Jerusalem met Athens: An Introduction to Classical Thought*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.
- Rives, JB. 2005. Christian Expansion and Christian Ideology, in Harris WV. (Ed.). *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries: Essays in Compilation*, 43-53. Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Robinson, JH. 1905. *Readings in European History*. Boston: Ginn.
- Robinson, JM. 1996. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. Coptic Gnostic Library Project. New York: Brill.
- Roldanus, J. 2006. *The Church in the Age of Constantine: The Theological Challenges*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Roth, JD. 2013. (Ed.). *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian debate*. Eugene: Pickwick Publications.
- Saldarini, AJ. 1988. *Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier.
- Saldarini, AJ. 2000. Sectarianism, in Schiffman, LH. & VanderKam, JC. (Eds.). Vol. 2: *Encyclopedia of Dead Sea Scrolls*, 853-857. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Saucier, LK. 2008. Historical Research, in Given, LM. (Ed.). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, 396-400. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885a. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 1: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885b. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 2: Fathers of the Second Century: Hermas, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and Clement of Alexandria (Entire)*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885c. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 3: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.



- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885d. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 4: The Fathers of the Third Century: Tertullian Part IV; Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885e. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 5: The Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus; Cyprian; Caius; Novatian; Appendix*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885f. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 7: The Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885g. *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol. 8: The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, The Clementia, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Age*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.) 1885h. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 1. Vol. 2: St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.).1892i. *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Series 2 Volume 4. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters: Ecclesiastical History*, Grand Rapids,
- Schaff, P. (Ed.) 1885j. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 1. Vol. 3: St. Augustine's On the Holy Trinity; Doctrinal Treatises; Moral Treatises*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885k. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 1: Eusebius Pamphilus: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885m. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 2: Socrates and Sozomenus Ecclesiastical Histories*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885n. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 3: Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, & Rufinus: Historical Writings*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.). 1885p. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 4: Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.) 1885q. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 8: Basil: Letters and Select Works*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schaff, P. (Ed.) 1885r. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Series 2. Vol. 10: Ambrose: Selected Works and Letters*. Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.
- Schott, JM. 2008. *Christianity, Empire, and the Making of Religion in Late Antiquity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Shuttleworth, M. 2008. Descriptive Research Design. Explorable.com. Available from: <https://explorable.com/descriptive-research-design/discuss>. [Accessed: 13 January 2018.]
- Stark, R. & Bainbridge, WS. 1985. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stark, R. & Bainbridge, WS. 1987. *A Theory of Religion*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Stevenson, A. (Ed.). 2010. Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. Online Available from: DOI: 10.1093/acref/9780199571123.001.0001. [Accessed 18 September 2017.]
- Streb, CK. 2010. Exploratory Case Study, in Mills, AJ., Durepos, G. & Wiebe, E. (Eds.). *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, 372-374. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Taylor, PJ., Catalano, G. & Walker, DRF. 2002. Exploratory Analysis of the World City Network. *Urban Studies* 39(13):2377-2394.
- Tilley, MA. 2012. North Africa, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 485-503. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tanner, N P. (Ed)1990. *Decrees Of The Ecumenical Councils*. Volumes 1, Nicaea I to Lateran V. Washington: Georgetown University
- Thompson, GL. 2015 Bauer's Early Christian Rome and the Development of Orthodoxy in Hartog, PA. (Ed.). *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Early Christian Contexts: Reconsidering the Bauer Thesis*, 213-234. Oregon: Pickwick Publications.
- Unisa. 2015. *Procedures for Master's and Doctoral Degrees*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Van Dam, R. 2011. *Remembering Constantine at the Milvian Bridge*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dam, R. 2012. Bishops and Society, in Casiday, A. & Norris, FW. (Eds.)., *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Constantine to c. 600*, 343-367. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Van der Horst, PW. 1998. *Hellenism-Judaism-Christianity: Essays on Their Interaction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Leuven: Peeters Press.
- Vermes, G. 2012. *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicaea (AD 30-325)*. London: Penguin Group.

- Waddell, WG. 1964. *Manetho's Babylonian History*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Wassen, C. & Jorikanta, J. 2007. Groups in Tension: Sectarianism in the Damascus Document and the Community Rule, in Chalcraft, DJ. (Ed.). *Sectarianism in Early Judaism: Sociological Advances*, 205-245. London: Equinox.
- Weber M 1930 *The Protestant ethic and the "spirit" of capitalism*.
- Wickham, LR. 1997. *Hilary of Poitiers, Conflicts of Conscience and Law in the Fourth-century Church*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Wickman, E. 2017. *Shaping Church-State Relations After Constantine: The Political Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, F. 2009. *The Panarion Of Epiphanius Of Salamis*. Book 1 (Sects 1-46). Leiden, Boston: Brill.
- Williams, R. 2001. *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Wilson, BR. 1970. *Religious Sects: A Sociological Study*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Wilson, BR. 1990. *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Yoder, JH. 1984. *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Damme Press.
- Yoder, JH. 2003. The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Young, FM. 2012. Towards a Christian Paedeia in 485-503, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 485-503. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, FM. 2012. Monotheism and Christology, in Mitchell, MM. & Young, FM. (Eds.). *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Origins to Constantine*, 452-469. New York: Cambridge University Press.